

A vibrant rainbow arches across a bright blue sky filled with fluffy white clouds. In the foreground, a large, leafy tree stands in a lush green field. The entire scene is framed by a decorative blue border with a white floral pattern.

"Rainbow"

Moshe Glotman



“Rainbow”

A Life History in the Wake of the Transnistrian Holocaust

“They have greatly oppressed me from my youth,
but they have not gained victory over me.
Plowmen have plowed my back
and made their furrows long.
May all who hate Zion
be turned back in shame.”

Psalms (“Tehilim”) 129 – 2,3,5.

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This book is dedicated to the memory of:

My father, **Eliyahu**

My mother, **Leah**

My brother, **Shimon**, who perished in the Coastal Road
Massacre on March 3rd, 1978.

My sister **Malka Glatman**



My uncle, **Binyamin Glotman**

My aunt, **Leah Glotman**

My cousin, **Tzirel Glotman**

My cousin, **Beileh Glotman** – perished in the Holocaust

My cousin, **Rachel Glotman**



My uncle, **Yankel Edelman** – perished in the Holocaust

My aunt, **Hantze Edelman** - perished in the Holocaust

Their children: **Moshe** and **Hanna** - perished in the Holocaust



My aunt **Malka** - perished in the Holocaust

Her husband **Pisia** - perished in the Holocaust

Their children: **Moshe**, **Riva**, and **Motia** (the baby) - perished
in the Holocaust



My aunt, **Chava Gitter**

Her husband, **Tula Gitter**

Their son, **Gershon Gitter**



My aunt, **Dina Ackerman**

My uncle, **Binyamin Ackerman** - perished in the Holocaust

Their son, **Moshe Ackerman** - perished in the Holocaust



My aunts, **Susia** and **Ziesel** - perished in the Holocaust

My uncle, **Menashe Edelman**

My aunt, **Malka Edelman**





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Rainbow

“I have set my rainbow in the clouds” (Genesis 9:13)

Introduction

I indeed have something in common with Noah.

We both survived - he the devastation of the flood, and me the deluge of the Holocaust. In contrast to the common denominator, the disparity between us is that while Noah had direct communication with God – for us the line was cut off.

We did not have an ark made of gopher wood, which would at least save the innocent and the honest - the children - who certainly did not corrupt the country.

(“Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight” - Genesis 6:11).
Like beasts of the sea that were saved from the flood, thus are we, survivors of the Holocaust - and we are obligated to tell our story.

A 10-year-old boy then, I dedicate this introduction to my comrades - the 1.5 million children, among them my friends and relatives, who, if they lived today, would probably have had among them book writers, singers, jesters, and lovers.
Instead, they have become “Innocent Victims”

(a poem from my book “Poetic Paths”).

July 5, 1990 [In memory of the 1.5 million children of the Holocaust]

Innocent Victim

In the heavens
Berth of truth
Dark eyes shine
With the glow of youth

Not a redeemer
From the valley of death
No Shema Yisrael
To renew their last breath

Their bones are brittle
But their teeth still small
So many bodies
Children - all

In the columns of smoke
That pierced the heart of the sky
Their souls rose
And there they still lie

God took them away
Sisters and brothers
Straight to the heavens
From the arms of their mothers

Every year
Their memory decreed
In holiness and purity
We will pray – let it be

Weeping, crying
Waves of sound
Where is God!
From the depths of the ground

That evil dies
As does pain and strife
And together we will stand
Only in life

קִרְבֵּן תַּמִּים

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| בְּרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם, | לֹא מוֹשִׁיעַ גּוֹאֵל, |
| אִישׁוֹ בְּמִרוֹמִים, | מִגִּיא הַצְלָמוֹת, |
| בְּהוֹת הָעֵינַיִם, | לֹא "שִׁמְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל!" |
| מִבְּרֶק נְעוּרִים. | - הַצִּילָם מִמָּוֶת. |

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| עֲצָמוֹת יָבֵשׁוּ, | בְּתַמְרוֹת הָעֵשׂוֹן, |
| אֶדְ שֹׁנֵי הַחֶלֶב, | פָּלְחוּ לֵב שָׁמַיִם, |
| גּוֹפּוֹת לֹא נָטְשׁוּ, | עֲלֵתָה נִשְׁמָתָם, |
| גּוֹפּוֹת - הוּא מָה רַב. | - שָׁם הֵם עֲדוֹן. |

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| לְקַחֵם אֱלֹהִים, | בְּתִשׁוּבַת כָּל שָׁנָה, |
| רַבּוּת, רַבּוּת, | עֵת זְכָרָם נַעֲלָה, |
| הַיִּשָּׁר לְמִרוֹמִים, | בְּקֶדְשָׁה וְטָהֳרָה, |
| מִחִיכֵי אִמָּהוֹת. | נִתְפַּלֵּל - לוֹ יְהוָה. |

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים, | - כִּי יִיתֵם יִמְגֹר, |
| זַעֲקוֹת-שֹׁבֵר, | הִרְשַׁע, הַשְׁכוֹל, |
| - "אֵיָה אֱלֹהִים!" | כִּי זְכוֹת הַחַיִּים, |
| - מַעֲמָקֵי קֶבֶר. | - תִּנְחַל - בֵּן - לְכָל. |



Chapter 1

Yedinitz - A Quick Glance

The last rays of the sun caress the town of Yedinitz. The dirt paths fritter away at the droppings of the horses and cows. The latter have just returned from the pasture, each one separating from the herd and entering the courtyard of its owner - without anyone directing them.

As darkness falls, the few electric bulbs hanging on taut wires are reflected in the large mud puddles beneath them and glow in the opacity of the night. The autumn wind and rain seal the villagers in their oil lamp lit homes. Here and there a lone man walks by, curled up in a long coat and fur hat, a walking stick in his hand, used mainly to check the depth of the mud puddles he had to pass.

This is Yedinitz, a small town in the province of Bessarabia, which borders Romania and the Ukraine. Traditionally, from generation to generation, the rich lord lived with his wealth and the poor man with his poverty - the tailor, the shoemaker, the tinsmith, the carpenter, the matchmaker and the announcer, who was also an "informer" - at times.

Everyone together and each person separately knew his place and lived his fate with humility and joy.

The tradition made its mark on the lives of all. Each person fulfilled his destiny, but everyone's eyes were to the heavens. And "salvation" was not only a word from the prayer book but was a language shared by the whole.

There was no oath or wish in which "salvation and medicine" were not included.

On weekly market day, the Gentiles flocked to the town, with carts full of good things - vegetables, poultry, cheeses, etc.

The housewives filled their baskets with the bounty. The Gentiles returned the proceeds to the merchants and craftsmen, who dressed them from head to toe and loaded their wagons with plenitude. The Gentiles returned to their villages in the early evening, sated until the next market day.



History of the Town of Yedinitz

The name Yedinitz is apparently derived from the Russian - Ukrainian word "single" or "lonely." For me it also meant special.

The town was most likely founded in 1812 and in 1835 attained the official status of a town. The town's land belonged to the "Paritzim" (estate owners), who lived far away and who were of Polish and Catholic descent. They established some institutions in the town – a public school, a tea house, a community center, and so forth. They planted the "Bolivar" urban garden with fruit trees - a large cultivated garden - and within it they erected a palace for habitation. I remember this garden and its palace very well. There was a lake on which I recall seeing row boats with couples in love.

The town fell into Russian hands in 1820. It is not known exactly when Jews began living there, probably sometime around 1821. In 1897, there were 7397 Jews living there (according to the Russian Encyclopedia). During the Romanian rule of 1918, Jews from surrounding villages gathered to live in the town itself. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, established in 1952, depicts the town as follows: "The town is in the Moldovan Soviet Republic. Yedinitz contains soap factories, leather processing, brick industry, a flour mill, an agricultural education institution, two

high schools (in Russian and Moldavian), a school for working youth, cultural centers, cinemas, and two libraries. In the area, wheat, corn, sunflowers, and soybeans are cultivated, as well as cattle and sheep."

Today what is left of the Yedinitz Jewish community - after the Holocaust - is as follows: Approximately 2,300 live in Israel and some in overseas countries. About 5,000 perished in the Holocaust, were killed during the pogroms, or perished in the Transnistria camps after the Romanian-German occupation. May their memory be blessed!

The Town Environment

The smell of gardens. The spirit of the synagogue. Church bells ringing. The main street ("the Potshtova" – the Postal Street) blossomed in the spring with a rich splendor of colors and smells, mixed gardens of apples and pears, cherries and plums. Bird song whistled in the air and there was a green meadow. In the summer months, in autumn, and in winter, carriages drawn by dashing horses glided through a world made silvery by the light of the moon.

Nevertheless, Yedinitz was one of the most remote towns on the border between two countries. In terms of transportation and communications, the town was still in the Middle Ages. The nearest train station was 18 km away. There was not a single

manmade path or any roads to connect it with its surroundings. You always knew when you were departing, but you never knew when you would arrive, especially in the rainy autumn months. In the spring, with the melting of the snow, the roads turned to muddy swamps in which the horses, harnessed to their carriages, sank up to their stomachs. The outskirts of the town had about eight synagogues, surrounded by darkness and poverty. On the other hand, in the Jewish town center the Gentiles built their cloister (the church), tall and sparkling, with its many spiers and crosses.

This is where the Gentiles brought their living and their dead, and frightening bells rang in the bewildered town. During the cold and snowy winter days, bands of black crows dwelled on the tall church spiers, and from there they would raid the town with deafening shrieks – a grim omen of what was to come...



The Yedinitz Community Under Romanian Rule

The fall of Bessarabia into the hands of the Romanians, and their traditional hatred of Jews, alongside their suspicion of Jews as a foreign and dubious element, made its mark on town life with persecution and a decline in the quality of life of the residents. The town was actually under military rule throughout the period of Romanian governance. This was reflected in the frenzy of sadistic inclinations. The town was under the sole control of the hateful gendarmerie. The Station Chief was like a dictator, and all the residents were at the mercy of his command. He was the legislator, the judge, and the administrator, and his mood and the number of glasses of wine he consumed were definitive to the safety and lives of the townspeople. The Station Chief oversaw the town's ethics. He controlled their social life and culture. He alone decided whether to hold or disperse meetings. He even disbanded those that he himself had approved. He decided on theatrical performances and entertainment evenings. He imprisoned people and freed them – he was everything.

On Saturday nights, the youth and adults used to go to Potshtova - the long main road - to buy seeds from the Katzaps and enjoy a stroll. It was a meeting place for young men and women, where first loves were forged, where the adults and

youth exchanged opinions about politics - "What will happen?" And suddenly the drunk and sullen Station Chief appears and announces in a shrill voice - "Everyone Home!" Like a flock of frightened sheep, they all fled to the side streets. Yes, he was the "supreme ruler," the sole governor of the defenseless citizens of the town, while from the outside, the town government was being pressed by increasingly tight and hostile administration, which tried to eradicate all the life energy.

Among its means: economic strangulation, accompanied by heavy and burdensome taxes, whose aim was to destroy the physical life of the town. The town was trapped in a social and spiritual crisis marking the disintegration of traditional Jewish life, at home and on the streets. The shared ideal that boys and girls get married and build their home in their neighborhood near the family nest was gone.

The parents' livelihood was also lost, and it was no longer possible for sons and grooms to be supported by their parents - neither in commerce nor in craft. Inside the home, the abyss between the parents - regarding traditions of the past and their faith, and the sons - whose land was pulled out from under them, increased and left them pondering their way of life and their future. The feeling that gripped most of the youth was that here, in this town as it was, they could not expect a good future.

Some of the youth began to wander, in the tradition of

persecuted Jews, seeking their futures as individuals in distant lands. They went on their way to Brazil, Peru, Chile and other countries overseas, to try their luck (the gates of North America were locked). Emigration to these countries involved great difficulties and few could afford to try to reach countries overseas. My uncle Peylat emigrated to Brazil even before I was born. Not everyone could consider the possibility and ability to solve their problems by emigration. There developed a messianic stream of the kind we know well from the history of our people in times of distress - an imaginary messianism that grows wings and rises far from the gray and bitter reality of the town, with the enthusiasm of Chasidim and hatred of opponents, in the belief in the piety and devotion of sanctifying God's name. They live in a world of fairytales, although they think this is a belief in realism based on historical scientific analysis.

Some of the youth began to cling spiritually to the world proletariat, the class about to conquer the future birthright, and lived under the illusion that they had indeed ascended the path of redemption. These teenagers lived mostly idle lives, because there was nothing to do, being supported by their parents. Their war against capitalist society was expressed by secretly waving a red flag on the electricity poles on the First of May. They busied themselves with distributing flyers on October Revolution day and in the study of Communism. They

tried to undermine the foundations of the regime, and what is interesting is that the Romanian authorities related to them seriously and tortured them as befits genuine revolutionaries, as if they really endangered the regime. Admittedly there was a lot of enchantment in the world of their thoughts, their actions, their passion, and their faith, and it is a pity that this wonderful youth was partially lost in the Nazi hell, and irrecoverable to the people of Israel.

In search of a way out of the situation in which they found themselves, they formed Zionist youth movements in the second half of the 1920s, the essence of which was education, and their thoughts were influenced by the reality in the country and the political and settler currents that were gradually taking shape.

The youth movements "Gordonia," "Beitar," "Hamizrahi," etc. served as a refuge for the golden Zionist youth of those days. The Zionist youth movements drew masses of teens in the town. The youth movements were anchored in tradition, and despite their many offshoots, there was still much of the warmth and vivaciousness of the Jewish home and experience - the Sabbath in the town, the preparation for Passover and the Pesach Seder, the cheerfulness and mischievousness of "Simchat Torah," "the High Holy Days," and the rest of the Jewish holidays - and their application was still steadfast in the youth's

emotions. This was the consciousness and subconsciousness of most of the youth in the town - the Jewish heritage that they absorbed in "cheder" and in Hebrew school.

All of these served as an excellent background for the growth of a large-scale Zionist youth movement. The youth movement gave confidence to the teens that joined it, taught them how to organize their lives, and bound them to nature. All of this dispelled their despair over the grim reality surrounding them and instilled in them a belief in a better life. The intensification of the Zionist youth movement reached its peak in the 1930s and became the center of life and content of the whole town.

Many hundreds of boys and girls were already organized in the youth unions, dozens of the older ones among them preparing for Aliyah, and some had already immigrated to Eretz Israel. There is no doubt that if fate had added another ten years of activity to the youth unions, we would have witnessed the town's depletion of its youth, most of whom looked towards Israel. Lamentably and disastrously, many of them perished in the abhorrent Holocaust.



Jews and Christians - Neighborly Relations

On the outskirts of the town lived a Christian population of several thousand people. This population was divided into several factions. There were the Katzaps, the Gypsies, and the Moldovans. The Katzaps spoke a sort of Ukrainian, and the Moldovans and the Gypsies a sort of Romanian lingo. The Katzaps cultivated flowers, seeds for snacking, etc. The Gypsies were usually blacksmiths and nomads. The Gypsies were considered inferior by the Gentiles. When they wanted to hurt the Jews, they would say, "The Jews are like Gypsies." The Christians on the outskirts of the town dealt in agricultural crops, cattle, poultry, etc. They did not have roads in their area, as they were not in the town. The mud in the winter days sunk the wagons and horses. In spring the mud turned into hard patches of earth, and in summer to fine soil.

The proximity between the two sectors of the population was not only geographic, but also had professional, service-related, and social elements. The Gentiles felt like "allies" among the Jews. The church - their cloister - was proudly displayed in the heart of the town.

At their funerals that passed through the town on their way to the cloister were the Jews, who of their own accord removed

their hats in respect of the occasion. Most of the vegetable and fruit stalls in the two markets in town belonged to the Gentiles and of course most of the buyers were the Jews. The Jews provided the Gentiles with the best. The craftsmen - the shoemakers, the tailors, the tinsmiths, as well as the owners of the well-stocked shops, supplied the Gentiles with everything they desired.

The Gentiles returned the income from selling their wares in the markets to the Jews, who dressed them from head to toe and loaded their wagons with bounty. Thus, the Gentiles returned sated to their villages in the evening, and the Jews were left satisfied with their reciprocal economic relations. The Gentiles also filled marginal service roles in Jewish life. Among them were the Klezmer musicians who played at Jewish weddings. They were familiar with all the special and standard melodies at Jewish weddings. They knew all the music for when the bride was led to and from the wedding canopy, or for accompanying the families to their homes the day after the wedding.

The Klezmers also knew sad tunes when necessary. Purim bands (Purim shpieler) were also non-Jewish musicians. They would pass among the Jewish houses on the eve of the Purim feast and the next day. The non-Jewish Klezmer played when a new Torah scroll was brought to the synagogue. Despite the apparent idyll, among themselves the Gentiles were full of

hidden hatred and deep envy, and in fact looked forward to their day of vengeance. Unfortunately, this day came in July 1941, with the change of government. The hatred that is rooted in the Christian tradition – related to the "killing of Jesus" - had not changed.

The rest is recounted in the tragic history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. Perhaps we can wonder about the inconceivable brutality of the Gentiles toward the Jews - despite the "idyll."

Regarding the relationship between the Romanian regime and the Jews we can also add that despite the oppression and tyranny of the Romanian government, and since the government was corrupt from the smallest gendarme to the Station Chief, the Jews learned their method – and it was bribery. With a "small" or "large" bribe in most cases it was possible to achieve a lot, but not everything. Our brothers, the children of Israel, had no choice but to take advantage of this situation.



My Family in Yedinitz



My father Eliyahu and my mother Leah

On the second day of Chol Hamoed Pesach in 1931 I was born to my father Eliyahu (Elia) and my mother Leah of blessed memory. I was the eldest in the family. My late brother Shimon was born three and a half years later. My parents got married at an early age. My father was 19 years old and my mother was 18. Both came from hard-working families. My father was orphaned from his mother at a very young age. He was one of four brothers and sisters – my father, Dina, Hantze, and Binyamin (the eldest). My grandfather David could not support all of them and so each had to make his own way. My father was a quick, diligent fellow, and fiercely fought the war of existence. His father, my grandfather, was a tinsmith by profession, and his sons Elia and Binyamin also learned the tinsmith trade. The tinsmithing included making household utensils from tin - bowls, samovars, buckets, etc.

Tin roof coverings were an important area of my father's work, and his expertise. Making coverings for churches with slanted roofs, with all the risks it entailed, was a special field of work and he and his brothers specialized in it. My father, who was not tall, was a very agile man and he did not scoff at any work that supported him.

My father's diligence and devotion to every goal led him to my mother, who was a very beautiful woman. Her best friend, Tzvia, tried with all her might to separate them - but without success. My father, who persisted and courted my mother unwaveringly, as was his practice with every task, did not give up and conquered her heart.

My mother was one of three sisters and three brothers - Yankel, Peylet, Menashe, Chava, and Malka - of blessed memory. Almost all of them perished in the Holocaust, (except for Peylet, who emigrated to Brazil in his youth, he had no children and he died there). I have never seen him, only his photo. My mother was the most active in her impoverished family. My mother and her siblings were orphaned at an early age. My mother's thirst for knowledge was highly unconventional in those days.

Boys were sent to cheder for Torah study and prayer, while girls were supposed to be at home with their mother learning how to cook and bake, that is, preparation for marriage – to be an

efficient housewife. My mother, in her pursuit of knowledge, would sneak into cheder, pressing her ear to the window to hear what was being taught there, until the rabbi of the cheder came to her parents and told them that this girl was destined for greatness, in her desire to increase knowledge. In time, it was proven that she was the only one in the family who could read and write in Yiddish. She also had clear and beautiful penmanship. My father also enlisted her assistance with writing and reading letters. I remember how on the High Holy Days, our aunts and neighbors would gather in our house around my mother who read "Tchina" (a prayer book for women). They were all illiterate and didn't understand any of it, but they knew that when Mama commenced reading the Tchina, they must begin to shed a tear.

As I said, my mother and brother were orphaned at an early age and were hurled into a harsh life, a life of terrible poverty. My mother fought the war of existence and understood that a profession was the most important thing that one could learn. She learned how to sew blankets – from wool, cotton, etc. Her course of study was not easy. She was taken advantage of by her employers, worked for pennies, but stuck to her objective to earn a decent living on her own and not require the help of others. My mother specialized in her profession. She later made money and even helped her poor sisters and their impoverished families. My father, too, found it difficult to learn

the profession of tinsmithing and his hardships in this matter were similar to those of my mother.

The poverty and the anguish of those days encompassed the entire community of Yedinitz. There were also the wealthy, the store owners, and the merchants who earned a lot of money. To their credit it can be said that they helped the many destitute townspeople in the framework of the "Community Committee," which was organized for this purpose. In addition, the committee represented the Jews before the Romanian government and resolved all sorts of inter-community issues. It was "not respectable" to ask for financial help from the Community Committee and those who had to, did so modestly and covertly. Most of them preferred to try to make a living as best they could.

There were numerous occupations, from the water carrier (wasser treiger), who traveled with a cart carrying a large wooden barrel of water with a faucet on its side and sold jugs of water to the habitants. The water carrier would fill the barrel from the town wells. (There were two types of wells - "good water" and "simple water.")

Tailoring was a respectable profession, and many sent their sons to be tailors' apprentices. The tinsmith made various dishes from tin, samovars, pails, and all sorts of tools that were

utilized in the household. The shoemaker was not idle, since shoe repairs were very common. The carpenter and many other professionals came to serve the community, and especially the Gentiles who lived in the area.

The announcer had a special function (Leibale der Schreier). He would stand in the street – with the children gathered around him – as he loudly reported on the theater show that was about to appear in the town, and about bathing in the public bathhouse for women and men. As an addition to his livelihood, he was also an informant when necessary. He often "made sure" to visit the post gendarme, someone who supposedly checked the weights and found them "unsuitable" and demanded a large monetary fine. In such a case, the announcer Leibale der Schreier was summoned, and for a significant sum he would be off like a magic wand - the commissar.

The textile shops belonged to the wealthy merchants, as well as the large food stores. The matchmaker was in high demand. A male who came from another town was pounced on by the matchmakers as if he were a magnificent treasure and offered him the best.

Every Monday and Thursday of the week there was a market to which the Gentiles of the area came, and brought with them agricultural produce - poultry, vegetables and all kinds

of treats. Housewives filled their baskets with the plentitude. The Gentiles left the proceeds with the merchants and the tradesmen, who dressed from head to toe and loaded their carts with bounty. Towards evening the Gentiles returned to their villages, satiated until the day of the next market.

In the agricultural villages that surrounded the town, there was also a Jewish minority, among them my uncle Yankel - my mother's brother - who was married to Hantze, my father's sister. They lived in a village called Quart. I remember that Yankel would come to us in a cart pulled by two horses, together with his family - his wife Hantze, his son Moshe (Motia) and his daughter Chana, who also played the violin. How happy I was when they came over. I would get on the harnessed wagon with my friends Lulia, Boris, Davidka and Zembel - my cousin. Uncle Yankel would take us for a ride in the town. I felt like a king when Uncle Yankel let me hold the reins. My Uncle Yankel and his entire family perished in the Holocaust. May their memory be blessed!

In the town and the surroundings there also lived Gypsies, Moldavians who spoke a Romanian dialect, and Katzaps who spoke Ukrainian Russian. The Gypsies would pass through the town in their convoys with wagons built like tents, in which the entire Gypsy family stayed. When the Gypsy convoy arrived, we children would hide in the house because rumor had it that

the Gypsies kidnapped children. The Gypsies were actually like Bedouins. Their craft was making iron tools such as knives for chopping meat and so forth. The Gypsies would appear in the town with trained bears who knew how to dance. As remuneration for the show they were thrown a few leu (Romanian currency).

The Katzaps excelled in growing flowers, roasting black seeds, pumpkin seeds, etc. I remember that on Fridays, Mama bathed us in the tin tub that Papa had made himself. (They would place the bath on two stones under which was a Primus stove.) After the bath, Mama smeared our heads with kerosene against lice, and dressed us in Sabbath clothes. I would go out with my friends to the side of the road where the Katzap women sat, with their embroidered, colorful dresses. They would sit cross legged with their sack of seeds in front of them. I would buy a cup of seeds, the Katzaps would pour the seeds into my pocket, and it gave me the festive feeling of the Sabbath.

On Saturdays and holidays, I would go with my father to the small and intimate synagogue in which Father had a respectable place in the East. The synagogue also served as a "local and global information center." There were those who were "in the know" and "news distributors," and the Jews would gather around them drinking in every word. I remember as a child that I once heard a news distributor say that he heard

that in the Land of Israel houses are built over the Jordan for the Jews, and that Chaim Weizmann is personally taking care of the matter.

I loved cantorship very much, so much so that more than once I laid on a small couch in the house and loudly imitated the cantor. My father took me to cantorship concerts, which I enjoyed very much. I must admit that to this day I miss hearing the prayers and cantorial of those days, which were so beautiful and pleasant - it was purely soulful cantorship.

One of the most exciting experiences, which stemmed from the atmosphere of faith that encircled the whole community, was the Rabbi's Tish (feast). From time to time prominent rabbis, great Torah scholars, would stay in the town. In our town there was a local rabbi and rabbinical assistant. They always quarreled among themselves and therefore upon the arrival of an esteemed rabbi from another city, he was always received with special reverence. The Gabai (synagogue manager) would lay out the Tish with food, drinks, etc. The distinguished rabbi sat in a separate room draped with light and holiness. Anyone could enter it - separately - to receive the Rabbi's blessing and advice. There was of course no end to people's troubles, matters of livelihood, problems with family and children, etc. I remember that I always went with my father to the Tish and to the rabbi. The aura with which my father glowed for this visit

made us feel as if we were meeting with God Himself.

The truth is that the Rabbi had stature, and he knew how to navigate his answers to the problems that had been laid out before him. The Rabbi did so out of love and deep understanding of the problems of those who sat before him, so that you could do nothing but accept his every word as a prized possession. When I left him, after receiving his blessing, I still felt the warmth of when he put his hand on my head, the love and the change for the better that the Rabbi imparted.

On a completely different note, several years ago there was a certain problem in my family, and in consideration of my father, we decided to go to a rabbi we already knew from abroad. I will not mention the name of the rabbi. I will only say that we expected - my father and I – in the depth of our hearts, the same treatment and sense of holiness as in those days. Our disappointment is expressed in the song "To the Rabbi" from my book "Poetic Paths."

August 24, 1992

To the Rabbi

I am very distressed, I feel my heart sob
I will pick myself up, and go to the Rav
I will pour out before him, the pains of my heart
From his mouth I will hear his wisdom depart

I donned my clothes, a kippah on my head
All was in place, every last thread
I kissed the mezuzah, in silent meditation
And gathered enthusiasm, for my private adjuration

Great Holiness, hold on to me
Something inside me may shift and be free
Childhood memory, my father's hand in mine
We went to the Rabbi, for blessings divine

In a bright room, a sacred aura
Candles and a table, white like no other
Holy books and a Torah scroll
With golden letters to emblaze the soul

He gazed at me with his innocent eyes
His white beard, big in size
His warm hand grasped my head
With prayers and blessings that he said

24.8.1992

לָרֵב

בְּצֵר לִי מֵאֹד, הֵלֵב כִּי יִדְאֵב,
אֲמֶרְתִּי - אָקוּם וְאֵלֶיךָ לִי לָרֵב.
אֲשַׁפֵּךְ לִפְנֵיו, אֶת מְרִי לְבִי,
מִפִּי כִּי אֲשַׁמֵּעַ - יְעוֹדֵד רוּחִי.

הִתְקַנַּנְתִּי בְּגֵדִי, כִּפָּה עַל הָרֹאשׁ,
הַדּוּקָת סִכָּה, לֹא תִפֹּל, לֹא אֲבוֹשׁ.
אֲשַׁק לְמִזְוָה, בְּתַפְלָה חֲרִישִׁית,
פַּעֲמֵי שְׂמִתִּי - לְפִגְיִשָּׁה הָאִישִׁית.

חֲרַדַּת קֹדֶשׁ, אוֹתִי כִּי תֵאָחֵז,
דִּבֵּר מִה בְּתוֹכִי, הָמָּה - אוֹלֵי זֶז.
זְכֵרוֹן יְלָדוּת, יָד בְּיָד עִם אָבִי,
הִלְכְּנוּ לָרֵב - בְּרָכוֹת לְהִבְיָא.

בְּחֶדֶר מוֹאֵר, הִילַת קֹדֶשָׁה,
שִׁלְחֹן, גִּירוֹת וּמִפָּה לְבָנָה.
לָרֵב צְפוּפִים, עֲמָדוֹ בְּגוֹדֶשׁ,
אוֹתִיּוֹת זָהָב וְסַפֵּרִי קוֹדֶשׁ.

נֶעֶץ בִּי מִבֶּט - עֵינָיו הִתְמַיְמוֹת,
זָקְנוּ הַלֶּבֶן, גְּדוֹל הַמַּיִדוֹת.
עֲדַנְת יָדוֹ, נִחְתָּה עַל רֹאשִׁי,
בְּתַפְלָה, בְּרָכָה וְקוֹל חֲרִישִׁי.

Our bodies are full, full of feeling
Gone the weakness, the pain, the reeling
But new powers from a source that is true
Our holy Rabbi, knows the soul of the Jew

And so in my innocence, memory alight
To the Rabbi, I carry my plight
The street, the house, the number remembered
A tall, still tree, branches black as embers

Slowly the Rabbi opened the door
In the midst of the splendor, feet on the floor
He greeted me warmly, welcomed his guest
Please do come in, and may you be blessed

On an empty table, plain and whole
Lay holy books, a candle, a bowl
And the bowl it overflowed
With all the money that had been bestowed

I leaned towards him as I spoke
I unburdened my soul, my heart, my yoke
I waited eagerly for his words of wisdom
As befits a Rabbi, a man of Judaism

גופינו נמלא, ריגוש ותחושה,
חלפנו הרעה, הבאב, החלשה.
כוחות חדשים, ממקור לא אכזב,
אשר השפיע, עלינו הרב.

יכה לתמי, לאור זיכרונות,
לעבר הרב, המשכתי לצעד.
רחוב, הבית, מספר טבוע,
עץ שחוח עמד - ללא נוע.

פתח לי הרב, הדלת לאט,
במלוא ההדר, זקוף הוא עמד.
קבל את פני, בקידה קלה,
- ברוך הבא וברוך הנמצא.

על שלחן חשוף, גדול ופשוט,
ספרי קדש, קערה ופמוט
הקערה, מלאה עד מאד,
שטרות פסח ומתי מטבעות.

רכנתי עליו, במלוא המשקל,
רוקנתי מטען, מלב - עד יוקל.
למוצא פיו, צפיתי בערגה,
כיאה לרב, וגדול בתורה.

He stroked his beard, not terribly white
Turned his head, first left and then right
Mumbled a blessing, that was my guess
Raised his hand, "Shalom," time to digress

With great politeness, that's how I was raised
I put money in the bowl, and uttered my praise
I looked away, and tried not to run
My trip to the Rabbi appeared to be done

לִטֹף הוּא זְקֵנוּ, הֲלֹא מְגִדֵּל,
הַנִּיד רֹאשׁ יָמָיו, הַנִּיד לְצַד שְׂמֹאל,
פָּלַט בְּרָכָה - אוֹלֵי אֶף אֵיחּוּל,
הוֹשִׁיט יָד "שְׁלוֹם", לַיּוֹשֵׁב מִמּוּל.

בְּדֶרֶךְ נִימוּס, אֶצְלִי כִי שְׁגוּרָה,
שֶׁלִּשְׁלֹתִי שׁוֹטֵר כְּסֵף לְקַעֲרָה.
הַשְׁפִּלְתִּי מִבֶּטֶן, בְּרָגֶל כּוֹשֵׁלֶת,
שְׁמֹתִי פָעַמִּי לְעֶבֶר הַדִּלְתִּי.

Faith was what united the town, and each according to his status in the community had a respectable place in his synagogue. There was no need to force anyone to observe the Sabbath, because the Sabbath and the holidays had natural sanctity. In the winter there were Gentiles who went from house to house in order to light a fire in the fireplace. Boiled water for tea was purchased from a woman who had prepared a large amount before the Sabbath, and she was paid after the Sabbath was over. In my childhood, the Sabbath and holidays were a memorable experience. My parents bought me a new suit for the holidays, and on rare occasions also shoes, according to their means at the time. The usual pastime in the town was to buy seeds and go for an excursion on Potshtova Street.

It was a wide street where there was the only pharmacy, a hospital, schools, and more. On the edge of the street were gardens of Acacia trees. This street was adjacent to the public park. It was a beautiful garden with fruit trees, pears and cherries. There was a lake in it in which lovers floated in row boats they had rented from the Polish landowner who owned the garden. My mother used to take me to this garden, we would sit under a tree on the green grass, and she would fatten me up as much as possible (since I was usually a child "who did not want to eat").

On Potshtova Street, there were two Jewish schools. One was Bitner and the other was Kozminer. There was no love between

them, to put it mildly. The seminary building was also on this street. It was a beautiful and spacious building for those days. It was once a seminary for priests, which later became a public school.



Chapter 6

Home and Family

I remember the small apartment where we lived.

The landlord was Leizer Machlis. Lazar Machlis was an affluent textile merchant, owner of a shop. Machlis was honest and respectable. He had no children. Our apartment consisted of two rooms located in the back of the Machlis House. In the house - like in all the houses - there was a cellar in which the cooked food was stored, in order to keep it cold. One room in our rented apartment was used for the blanket sewing facility and the second room, which was smaller, for living in.

Between the rooms was the prepichik - a place built for cooking on wood, with a chimney to the attic. In the double wall facing the living room was a basalt stone fireplace, which was heated by wood or from sunflower seed shells (liska).

In the small room stood a small, backless sofa, coated with brown leather-colored oilcloth. It had only one built-in headrest. My Uncle Menashe, who was still single, always sat on the headrest when he came to visit us, because the room was invariably crowded. I remember that I was very happy when Uncle Menashe came to visit. He was a pleasant and humorous man, and I waited for his visits fervently.

As a child, I was well aware of the scarcity. Although my parents worked, they could not give me what I saw at the houses of friends from more financially fortunate families. I recall how I would stand by the ice cream vendor's cart and watch people who bought glass cups full of delicious ice cream and ate it with pleasure. I "enjoyed" standing and looking at them, while I salivated.

When I was three and a half years old, my brother Shimon was born. At that time, we lived in a rented apartment nearby, with the Odia the matchmaker. Odia and her husband Nahum also had a fabric store, and she dealt in matchmaking. They had two children - a boy and a girl, whose names I don't remember. Odia was very suited to her matchmaking business. Matchmaking was very common. If any man came to our town from a different one, the matchmakers would pounce on him and offer him the best they had.

I was a "difficult" child, thin, and my parents didn't have an easy time with me. As a child I had bronchitis and my mother was forced by Dr. Greenberg - the only doctor in the town - to take me to the Heat Ray Institute (Shteralen). At the Institute they coated my naked body in a greasy cream and sat me down with all the children on a couch opposite a huge heating lamp. This treatment was in the late evenings. I'll never forget how my mother, after a hard day's work, took me in her arms

in the black of the cold, rainy night on muddy roads from the Institute towards home, wrapped up well so that I would not catch cold. More than once, she walked alone in the dark, in the rain, holding me with the last of her strength.

Being a child who "did not want to eat," I was sent to the community kindergarten on Potshtova Street. It was a kindergarten inside a fruit tree orchard. I recollect that I did not want to stay there the first few times. I screamed and cried, and my mother hid behind bushes and peeked at me to see if I had calmed down. They had very dedicated kindergarten teachers there, and I remember that I "fell in love" with one kindergarten teacher who was tall, tanned, and very kind. That was my first love.

The main food we received in the kindergarten was noodles with cheese and butter and a lot of milk - every day. To this day I love that dish. It was a special kindergarten for nutritionally problematic children.

When my brother Shimon was born, we lived in the second rented apartment with Odia. I remember the day before Shimon's brit milah I came back with Dad from his workshop, and the house was full of children for the reading of the "Shema". Well, it was a custom that the day before the brit, the Rabbi goes and collects all the children from the streets of the

town and they come with him to the newborn's house. They all read Shema Yisrael together under his guidance. He would say a word and all the children would repeat it. After reading the Shema, each child would receive upon leaving the house a paper bag containing a "pletzyl" cookie, two peanuts and some candies. At the door a boy would ask for another bag for his sister.

Since the age difference between me and my brother Shimon was not big, we would fight. My parents pampered him more. I recall a time when my mother was going to a nearby town - Brittshua - to relatives. The ride was in a carriage pulled by two horses, which made its way into the town within a few days. My mother took my brother Shimon in the carriage, and I cried and carried on because she wasn't taking me as well. I calmed down only after she had promised to bring me a present - a belt and a wallet. I remember that they bought me new shoes and my brother Shimon took them for himself. I chased after him throughout the town, to give me my shoes back.

In time I started school - first grade. Here my personal struggles began, which accompanied me for several years. There were two Jewish schools in the town where they studied Romanian and Hebrew. In first grade I went to Bitner's school, and in second grade I went to Kozminer's school. Kozminer was a solemn, hard-of-hearing man who ran a school in his big

private house on Potshtova Street. My mother's language was Yiddish and therefore the Romanian language they studied at school was very hard for me. They let me read a story and then I had to summarize it. I never succeeded in the task. They got me a private tutor. She used to summarize the story in writing and I had to memorize it word for word, which was a very challenging undertaking for me.

At the end of the school year, Kozminer visited my father at home, like he did with the rest of the parents, and told my father that in order to pass a grade, you have to pay such and such money. That's how it went under the corrupt Romanian regime for all students, the good and the less good. Those who did not pay did not pass the grade. At the end of the school year, a group of Romanian examiners arrived, and sat by a large table. It was agreed between the examiners and Kozminer that whoever was supposed to pass the grade would have to learn to recite a short poem "to the examiners' satisfaction." My father, of course, paid and so I moved to second and third grade and then World War II broke out.



The Withdrawal of The Romanians from Bessarabia and Its Ramifications on the Holocaust

On June 26, 1940, rumors spread in the town that the Russians had submitted an ultimatum to the Romanian authorities - within four hours they must withdraw from the region of Bessarabia. The Romanians immediately began a frightened exit from the Bessarabia area, which they had ruled since 1918. The Romanians had governed the town for twenty-two years. It was a ministry of tyrants, corruption, bribery, suppression of freedom, etc. Under Romanian rule, the Jews had grown used to the regime and its rules.

The townspeople ran businesses – some earned their livelihood easily, and some with more difficulty. The arrival of the Russians released waves of joy and new hopes for "redemption," freedom, and equality, but also ignited and aroused feelings of revenge against the Romanians. Communist foundations, especially young people, "chaperoned" the Romanian retreat in Yedinitz and in other places in Bessarabia – a humiliating escort. They knocked the Romanian cavalry from their horses, all in their belief in a complete redemption – that of the Soviets – and that no one had the power to bring the situation back to its prior state. It was a fatal mistake, for which the Jews paid with a great deal of blood and untold suffering when the

Romanians returned with the Germans in 1941 to Bessarabia. The heavy price they paid will be described later, all against the backdrop of their traditional deep hatred against the Jews - "the murderers of Jesus." The hasty retreat of Romanian army units from the territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina in the summer of 1940 served as a pretext for the Antonescu government to justify the annihilation policy of the Jews of Bessarabia in the summer of 1941.

The Romanians regarded the defeat in Bessarabia and Bukovina as a national disaster. They poured out all their rage over this with cruelty against the Jews - when the day came. Like I mentioned, the Jews were already used to Romanian rule, and although the Russian "Big Brother" enchanted many of them, the extent of their hope and joy matched the size of their disappointment when the Soviet regime began to control Bessarabia. The Romanians spewed their initial rage against the Jews of Regat - the Jews of Romania itself. During the 1940s, while the Jews of Bessarabia "enjoyed" Soviet rule, the Jews of Regat encountered the cruel brawn of the Romanian authorities. There was an explosion of rage following their forced retreat from Bessarabia and Bukovina and the rumors about the "Jewish escort" of the retreating Romanian units.

During 1940, rumors and reports of pogroms, harassment, killing and robbery against Jewish communities in Regat

were rampant. Filderman was one of the leaders of Romanian Jewry and the Jewish Committee in Romania. The Jews felt the approaching conflagration of all Romanian Jews more and more every day.

This was reflected in the property confiscation, dismissal of employees from government jobs, removal of soldiers and officers from the Romanian army, and abuse through extreme public humiliation. The anti-Semitic rampage did not circumvent schools, universities, doctors, lawyers, professionals, academics, etc. They were expelled and destroyed, even though their removal damaged the Romanian economy. The revenge impulse and anti-Semitic rage could not be stopped. It characterized everyone - from army officers to Romanian commoners. All this happened even before any Nazis set foot on Romanian soil. The Jews of Regat tried their best to renounce the actions of the Jews in the Soviet-occupied area, but the foul venom against the Jews as a whole was great, and the obsequiousness of Regat Jews towards the Romanian regime helped very little.

As I said, there was truth to the participation of the Jews in Bessarabia in anti-Romanian actions, however it should be emphasized that the majority of Jews locked themselves in their homes, frightened and worried about the sudden change. It should be noted and stressed that in many places during the

Romanian withdrawal, without provocation on the part of the Jews, the Romanians massacred the Jews they encountered during their deployment. Much of this was done by Major Valeriu Carp, commander of the brigade of an elite Romanian unit. He executed atrocious pogroms, to the extent that he was charged by the Romanians of murder and burglary. He was tried but was acquitted. In one of the villages, during the withdrawal, one of the Jewish families welcomed the retreating soldiers and offered them grains, bread, and cigarettes. After the respect the Jewish family demonstrated to the retreating soldiers, the family was stabbed with bayonets, tied to the tails of the horses, and dragged while the soldiers fired at the bodies being dragged.

Most of the Jews feared the unknown. All in all, the majority of the Jews that were under corrupt Romanian rule managed fairly well. Anything could be obtained by bribery. The Soviet "just regime" did not enthuse everyone. Indeed, it was well proven that "not everything was gold" in the Russian regime. Russian influence worked especially well on Jewish youth, who expected a righteous government with equality for all. Some of the youth clung to the Zionist ideal, were in Zionist movements and even immigrated to Israel. But the Zionist concept and its realization, seemed distant and utopian, while Soviet paradise lay right in front of their eyes.

Even before the Nazis had set foot on Romanian territory, and long before that, anti-Semitism had been deeply ingrained in the Romanian people. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact caused areas of Romania to be torn apart - Bessarabia to the Russians, Transylvania to the Hungarians, and Dobruja to Bulgaria. For the Romanian people, it was a national disaster, and their anger was inundated - as always - on the Communist Jews. It was easy for the regime to let out steam in this manner and satisfy the vengeful instinct of the Romanian people over their disaster.

The harassment of the retreating Romanian army by the Jews in several places was in fact the spark that ignited the venomous anti-Semitic carnage. Even some of the Jews of Regat, who were rooted in Romanian culture, language, economics, commerce and more, converted to Christianity many years earlier and bound their fate to the Romanian people. Everyone without exception, including the converts, began to feel the noxious anti-Semitism, which intensified daily.



Under Soviet Rule – I

In mid-June 1940, rumors spread in the town that the Russians had filed a relinquishment demand and ultimatum to the Romanian government, which had annexed Bessarabia "illegally" in 1918. "Bessarabia was historically part of Russia, therefore the Romanians must leave Bessarabia immediately." There were signs of astonishment among the Romanians. The civilian and military authorities of the Romanian Empire began to "pack their bags" and flee hastily from all areas of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. Rumor of the imminent approach of the Soviet "brothers" with a "just regime" brought with it new hopes of freedom, equal rights, and so on. The joy was felt here and there, especially among the leftist and Communist factions.

On June 28, 1940, the Red Army and Soviet heads of state entered Bessarabia. We knew that the Red Army controlled the hillock. The Red Army had a red flag, and so we called them "The Reds." Jews, and especially shop owners, painted the front of their homes and shops red. The Communist Youth walked with a red ribbon across their bodies. The word *turbarish* (comrade) was common among the Russians - as in "all the Soviets are comrades." It was forbidden to say "sir" but only "comrade." From Comrade Stalin to the last of the officials or officers it was

"Comrade Capitan" and so forth. As soon as they entered, they began to establish an absolute Soviet regime and to appoint local authorities headed by "sworn" Communists - local Jews and non-Jews - all of whom were partners to their opinions and worldviews.

The first step of the new rulers was to reckon with the local "lords." The Soviet comrades exhibited their malicious side, in its full glory, via the mass deportation affair, which they carried out in a heated rage. After a while they entered Bessarabia like redeemers. One tearful night, hundreds of people from the town and the surrounding villages were awakened from their sleep – the shopkeepers and the affluent, as well as the Zionists, former public officials, and estate owners, all of whom were considered negative elements for the Soviet regime and constituted a so-called security risk. They were sent to concentration camps in the bitter Siberian north. With a heavy heart and not a word, the Jewish public in Bessarabia carried the contempt and pain.

The Soviets also came down on religion and tradition - synagogues, wedding ceremonies, and circumcision, etc. - everything went underground. I remember that when my cousin Rachel, my Uncle Benjamin's daughter, married, they held a party at home while in the middle of the party the young couple crept into a hiding place, and there the chupah

took place - while taking maximum precautions that word of the event would not leak out.

As the Soviets entered, a shortage of food of all kinds was immediately felt. In the doorways of the shops that were nationalized by the authorities and turned into government markets, there were daily lines for sugar, bread or any other food. People would get up early in the morning to obtain a place in line for this shop or another, in which they distributed sugar, bread, oil, etc – all rationed.

In the year the Soviets governed, my father managed to buy an old apartment, which we renovated. It was the first time we moved into our own apartment. My father had invested a great deal in it. We furnished it and it was a beautiful apartment - in terms of those times.

Unfortunately, we did not manage to live in it for more than a year, since after the end of the Soviet rule and the infiltration of Romanians and Germans, the riots and the deportations made their mark. The year of Soviet rule was completely different from that of the Romanian regime. In theory, all of us were comrades, but the fanatic glorification of Stalin was absolute. We had to be extremely careful of deviating from this adoration - in speech, in action, or in daily behavior.

I studied in school in second grade, even though I was in third grade during the time of the Romanian government - the Russians brought everyone down a grade. At school we learned Russian and Yiddish, from a teacher named Gurevitch. We sang patriotic songs in Russian and in Yiddish. The content of the songs was praise for the new regime. Films that were screened outdoors, free to the masses, were all about war, valor, and of course exaltation for Russia and Stalin. In the elections that were held once, as I recollect, their slogan was, "Long live the first candidate of the United Soviet Socialist Republic, Comrade Yosif Vissaryonovich Stalin." He was the first and only candidate.



Chapter 9

World War II - The Entry of Romanians and Germans Into Bessarabia

On 22 June 1941, Nazi Germany and its allies suddenly attacked Russia, without a formal declaration of war and without regard to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. The German armored force raided Russian territories, and a week later the Germans and Romanians crossed the Prut River and invaded the towns of Bessarabia. Actually, most of the rural towns in Bessarabia fell into the hands of Romanian legions because the Russians had abandoned them earlier. Simultaneously with the main tactical border, the blood thirsty Romanians executed the occupation of Bessarabia and the military march to Russia, under Operation Barbarossa, and carried out a terrible series of murders and robberies against the Jews. The Romanian invasion of Bessarabia was an inferno of blood, fire, and pillars of smoke, mercilessly implemented by the Romanian military command in accordance with the personal instructions of Ion Antonescu.

The Romanians decimated the town of Yedinitz like barbarians in a wild frenzy with bullets of death shot into the courtyards and homes of the Jews. These shots were executed just for the diabolical pleasure of the soldiers, and continued for two days, during which about 1000 people were killed. The corpses were

loaded onto wagons and taken to the town cemetery. In the suburbs of the Christian population, the Romanians called for the non-Jewish citizens to go out to the town center – proudly - because the Jews' property was totally abandoned. Of course, most of the Gentiles did not wait for another invitation and pounced on the town streets like locusts. Many of the Christian residents even pointed out to the soldiers those Jews who were especially active during the year of the Russian regime. All of them were beaten and tortured to death.

Not only the residents of the local suburbs took part in the killings and robberies, but also many people from the surrounding villages. The robbery, the killings, the rapes, and the arrests multiplied daily. These bloody men committed abject and cruel acts of rape in broad daylight. There were also acts of heroism of fathers and husbands who fiercely defended the honor of their wives and daughters, and ultimately paid with their lives. The Jews were taken from their homes and lined up outside. They were ordered to leave the doors of their houses open, and before their eyes the Gentiles appeared with their carts, entered the Jewish houses, and took whatever they wanted. The Gentiles loaded their wagons with the Jews' belongings as the Jews stood in a line and watched the treachery.

The soldiers were given free rein to do whatever morbid and sadistic thing they wanted. The hysteria was so savage that

Romanian army officers tried to restrain it, but without success.

In Yedinitz the Gentiles established a court of law from their people. The Jewish men were taken out of the houses and brought before this court. To the right for death, to the left for life. My father was taken out of the house - like the rest of the men - we feared his fate and awaited his return, though we did not know what the court's plan was when he was taken out of the house. Half a day later he burst into the house crying bitterly, hugged us and told us what the court had said. He also told us which of the townspeople did not pass the selection and were executed on the spot. My father, who stood before the court, pleaded for his life, claimed that he was a simple man that had never harmed a Gentile, and thus he was turned left and was saved.

Afterwards the Gentiles passed among the houses of the Jews who had shut themselves up in their homes. Equipped with weapons, the Gentiles did a general selection and in the blink of an eye massacred men, women, and children. The murderers entered my teacher Kozminer's house and killed him in front of his children. His daughter was about 15, and she immediately asked the murderers to kill her too, because she could not stand to see her father wallowing in his own blood. Her request was immediately fulfilled, and she was murdered on the spot. Special emphasis was given to the religious-rabbinical sector.

They and the sacred objects were humiliated and desecrated in a way that no human language can describe. In one case, a priest was present for the humiliation and murder of rabbis. The next day the priest refused to enter the church and claimed he was ashamed, distraught, and appalled by the crimes of the rioters.

In the following lines we will try to cope with the painful issue of the emotional response of the Jewish community, in view of the disaster that afflicted this part of the Jewish people, from the point of view of faith. It should be emphasized that many Jews in Bessarabia knew Hebrew and many of the Hebrew teachers in Regat were born in Bessarabia. Among the Jews of Bukovina there was also a relatively large number of Hebrew speakers (as opposed to the rest of Romania). There were not many ultra-Orthodox Jews in Bessarabia, but the religious folk tradition was almost everything. In Bukovina, the number of Chasidim was relatively large, due to the presence of large rabbinical courtyards, but in both areas the Jews preserved a traditional lifestyle. The number of Torah scholars and those who knew Hebrew was great, and from the little that these survivors recorded, one can understand that the abysmal destruction raised unanswered questions about the nature of Jewish existence, the significance of the "punishment" that was implemented, and memories of other disasters that had afflicted the Jewish people in the past.

To continue my narrative of the harm that was inflicted on the Jews, it should be noted that the Jewish girls and women were in fact left totally without protection, and any sadistic beast could do with them as they pleased, without restraint, and then in the end, murder them.

Alongside the extreme acts of heroism on the part of the men who tried to protect their families, a group of young people and butchers in the town organized themselves - equipped with cold weapons – axes, knives, and so forth. They fought fiercely, until their last moments, but unfortunately, they all paid with their lives in fighting the rioters who were armed with guns. A particularly shocking incident happened to the Müllmacher family in Yedinitz. Müllmacher was the owner of a sewing shop in the market square. The Romanians raped his three young girls - in the presence of their father. Afterwards the girls went up to the attic and hanged themselves, and the father committed suicide by jumping into a deep well in the churchyard. There were many other similar cases, but few are known because there is no one left to tell about them. Reports of the seizure of Jewish girls, and their being held in German military brothels, were published in June 1942 in the journal of the Association of Romanian Jews in the United States.

The Italian writer Curzio Malaparte described a German military brothel set up in the city of Soroka where Jewish girls who were

caught in the fields were being held. Every twenty days they were replaced by "new" girls and executed. The writer who visited the brothel itself spoke to the educated Jewish girls in French.



Anti-Semitism as the Foundation of Unfathomable Hatred

The aforementioned is only part of the overall tragedy that befell the Jews of Bessarabia. The rest is to follow. We will try to explore some of the reasons for the catastrophe. Defining the Romanian nation and the Romanian individual based on bloodline and the Christian faith was already enforced in the Jewish Regulations of August 9th, 1940 at the end of King Carol II's reign, and before the pact with Nazi Germany. This law defined the Jew according to his religion and origin, while the Romanian was defined by lineage. In Jewish regulations and in the legislation that accompanied it, many clauses were included referring to "those of Jewish blood," whether or not they had converted to Christianity, whether or not they had declared themselves as atheists, and whether or not they completely considered themselves Christians.

The deportation from Bessarabia and Bukovina was supposed to include only "those of Jewish blood," as the Romanian Orthodox Church had defined. The prejudices prevalent among the people, in folklore, and in anti-Semitic literature attributed the Jews with negative genetic traits, and even monstrous ones. Getting rid of this "trouble" was considered a physical and mental purification. This was expressed consciously and

unconsciously in correspondence regarding the deportation, and in other actions to expel the Jews.

At the end of July 1942, the governor of Bessarabia published an order for all "Jewish blood" residents who remained in Bessarabia to report immediately to the police stations and register in the special census of "those of Jewish blood." It was the half-Jews and the quarter-Jews who managed to escape deportation to Transnistria, as well as Jewish women who were married to non-Jews and had converted to Christianity long ago. The duty to report and register did not apply to those Romanian citizens who, even though they had Jewish blood, had one parent that was not of Jewish origin, and had converted to Christianity before August 9, 1940. There were Jews during the deportation that gave their children to the Gentiles in order to save them, and even agreed that they could convert them to Christianity, but when this was discovered by the Romanian authorities, an instruction was issued to collect all these children and send them to the camps.

The direct and open incitement against Judaism, in which all elements of the Antonescu regime participated, with the explicit emphasis on everything affiliated with Jews, exhausted morals of humanity, as it justified from the onset any barbaric act against the Jews, and in fact permitted genocide. Jews ceased to be considered human beings and therefore

anything imaginable could be done to them, without being held accountable. The many acts of murder that took place in Bessarabia and northern Bukovina included elements of rage against a Christian backdrop, which had been cultivated for decades in churches, schools, literature, the army, and the press. On October 29, 1941, an article was published in one of the Romanian anti-Semitic newspapers, an article that emphasizes how extreme, sadistic hatred like this can get the upper hand, as the article stated: "The cry of the Jews was heard in the synagogues of Bucharest. An evil and tragic storm unfolds before our eyes. We smile, the rabbis pray, and the elders murmur Psalms and seek sanctuary among the pages of Ecclesiastes. The community discusses the epilogue of the drama, and the virgins light the lanterns. We hum melodies of satisfaction, but their world mourns. The Jews beg for mercy, we watch a holiday play. Sadistic satisfaction takes over us today and we are happy about the riots. The hooligans have avenged themselves at this moment. Judaism is wiped out."



Hitler's Integration into the Surge of Romanian Hatred

Hitler didn't require much to solve the Jewish problem. In Antonescu's Romania, Hitler encountered the atmosphere he desired. As we know, in certain occupied countries the local authorities didn't agree to cooperate with the Germans in connection with the extermination, however in Antonescu's Romania, Hitler had their complete understanding. This was before the occupation of Bessarabia by the Romanians and the Germans. Between February and June 1941, Romania in fact became a German-occupied territory. Hundreds of thousands of German soldiers were camped on its soil and at that time, shared preparations were under way by Germany and Romania for the "Final Solution."

In March 1941 special emissaries from the Reich and Himmler arrived in Bucharest. The delegation came to discuss the fate of Romanian Jewry. They demanded from Romanian Foreign Minister Mihai Antonescu that the problem of the Jews of Romania and its solution be handed over to the Germans, since the Germans were preparing the international solution to this problem. It should be noted that the attempt to acquire the handling of Romanian Jews was done when about 680,000 German soldiers were stationed on Romanian soil. This fact

primed the "understandings" in the matter of the annihilation of the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina. Alfred Rosenberg (the main Nazi ideologue) included the Jews of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina in the territories of Eastern Europe, which had already been divided on April 29, 1941 into five areas where "uniform treatment" of the Jewish problem was required. In those areas the Nazi extermination machine operated.

On May 7, 1941, Rosenberg issued instructions for the future Reich Commissar of the Ukraine in which it was determined that the Jewish problem would be dealt with by the establishment of ghettos and forced labor camps. At the same time, in March 1941, by virtue of the infamous ordinance called "the Fuhrer's Order," the Reich Main Security Office established the Mobile Unit for Genocide in the Occupied Territories in the East – the Einsatzgruppen. They numbered about 400-500 men and their activities were coordinated with the German military staff. They were supposed to work closely with the German military headquarters and the units that stormed the southern front, including Bessarabia and Bukovina. The order they received from their commander and from Himmler explicitly stated that they would act to murder men, women, and children.

Antonescu's visit to Hitler on June 12, 1941, had disastrous consequences for the fate of the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina. During the visit, Hitler promised Antonescu

unlimited territorial compensation in the East. At a meeting held at the headquarters of the Nazi party in Munich, Hitler gave Antonescu guidelines for the handling of Eastern Jews. An examination of practical steps taken by Antonescu in implementing the Romanian "Final Solution" in Bessarabia and Bukovina demonstrates prior knowledge of the establishment of the Einsatzgruppen, their role and their coordination with the German army, as Antonescu duplicated their methods.

After his return to Romania in June 1941, Antonescu, who was convinced of Germany's victory, prepared his own plan for solving the Jewish problem in Bessarabia and Bukovina. At the end of June 1941, the commander of the Romanian gendarmerie, Constantin (Pico) Basilyo, ordered for the territory of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina to be cleansed of Jews. Romanian units similar to the Einsatzgruppen were established after the return of Antonescu from Munich. The Romanian army received orders to cooperate with the Romanian annihilation units. The day before the war broke out, the Romanian Ministry of the Interior ordered the expulsion within 48 hours of the Jews from the villages and towns, as well as the imprisonment of the men - and in many cases also the women and children - in the Targu-Ziv camp. On June 28, 1941, riots began in the city of Iasi and throughout Romania, and the Jews were ordered to wear a yellow badge, as Antonescu's final solution was preceded by years of delegitimization of the Jew

as a human being. This order was predated by decades of the proliferation of hate - against an Orthodox Christian backdrop - by the Romanian Church that turned the Jews into "insects" and more.

In July 1941, the gendarmes and soldiers began to shoot tens of thousands of Jews in Bessarabia and Bukovina. This was preceded by riots against the Jews of Regat. Hundreds of Jews were thrown alive from carriages and their bodies were scattered along the railway tracks. Dozens of dismembered corpses were discovered in the urban slaughterhouse in Bucharest in January 1941. On July 8, 1941, Mihai Antonescu, Ion Antonescu's right-hand man, stated at a government meeting, "I ask of you - be merciless. There is no place here for unwarranted humanitarianism. I support the forced emigration of the entire Jewish element from Bessarabia and Bukovina. They must be sent beyond the border. I still do not know when - perhaps in a few hundred years - the Romanian nation will enjoy absolute freedom of action that allows for ethnic purification and national renewal. This is the hour that we are the masters of our land - we must take advantage of it. I am not afraid that history will judge us as barbarians. The Roman Empire carried out a series of barbaric acts against its contemporaries and nevertheless it was the greatest political tour de force. History will not grant us other benevolent opportunities. If necessary, use machine guns. And I tell you

that there is no law. Without the pedantry of formality and with free rein, I take upon myself full legal responsibility and tell you - there is no law!"

In the summer of 1941 the General Staff of the Romanian Army prepared a plan for incitement of the Romanian population in Bessarabia in order to carry out pogroms against the Jews. The order to murder some of the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina was given by the Romanian leader Ion Antonescu. To carry out the task he appointed two branches of the army and the security forces:

1. The gendarmerie under the command of the Ministry of the Interior
2. The Army Civil Administration of the army, known as "Pretoria"

On June 19, 1941, Antonescu gave the instructions to the army in this language: "All the Jews, Communist agents and their sympathizers must be identified, and their movement prohibited, so that we can carry out any order given in due course. The Romanians and Ukrainians who became Communists should be sent to the other side of the Dniester River, and all minority members of that category will be annihilated."

On June 30, 1941, during the visit of Commander Antonescu at

the front, orders were given to the officers to execute Jews at their discretion. There are those who hesitated to follow the oral orders and requested written instructions, but corresponding instructions arrived everywhere, and Jews were executed in droves. The civil servants (the prefects - the mayors and so on) were updated informally about the instructions. They collaborated with the concentration of Jews into ghettos and camps, their execution, and later their transport to Transnistria. The prefects received explicit orders from the Ministry of the Interior to institute a policy of extermination in places where Jews were found. On July 28, 1941 an urgent telegram was sent to all the prefects in Bessarabia and Bukovina.

The telegram ordered them to shoot, to enslave, and to starve the Jewish inhabitants throughout the territory of Bessarabia and Bukovina. The order to kill the Jews soon became an open secret, and every Christian in Bessarabia and Bukovina knew that the fate of the Jews was to die or be sent to their death. The soldiers, as well as the local residents, heard about the order and the special permit issued by the army, to do as they saw fit with the life of the Jews and their property. Testimonies of Jews and non-Jews affirmed three days of permitted murder.

The Romanian units, which participated in the conquest of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, were part of a military framework called "South" and consisted of the German 11th

army unit, Hungarian military forces, and the third and fourth Romanian army units.

Antonescu was officially the supreme commander of all the forces - Germans and Romanians alike - on the Romanian front. He received this appointment from the Fuhrer in Munich on 12.6.1941. On July 17, 1941, German 11th army units arrived in the Jewish center of the city of Belz (Bessarabia) and immediately organized a pogrom there. On July 26, 1941, large forces from the fourth Romanian army unit reached the Dniester.

It should be noted that only Romanian units operated in the south of Bessarabia. The local stages of extermination were two: spontaneous extermination and organized extermination. In rural and semi-rural areas (including towns) one could discern a spontaneous wave that could be called an "intermediate stage" - the period between the departure of the Soviet army and the entry of Romanian or German forces. Part of the local population took advantage of this situation to establish terror gangs who viewed their main objective as murdering, robbing, and raping Jews.

In August 1941, Vickolescu, governor of Bessarabia, told the press that the Jewish problem in Bessarabia had been "solved." Many Jews who fled during the riots were eventually returned

and their fate was that of the deportees. Some of them were transferred to improvised ghettos, and most of them were marched beyond the Dniester River to an occupied area between the Dniester River and the Bug River, that received the name Transnistria. This territory was occupied by the armies of Germany and Romania. Hitler offered this territory to Antonescu, in exchange for Romania's participation in the war.

The Einsatzgruppen units criticized the various aspects of the Romanian actions against the Jews - disorganization, non-burial of the victims, corruption, acts of rape, looting and more. In a report sent by the commanders of the Einsatzgruppen on August 14, 1941, it was noted that the solution of the Jewish problem in the area between the Dniester and the Dnieper was "given to unsuitable hands." When the first horrific days of rage passed, the atmosphere calmed down somewhat, if that can be said. The looting and killing of Jews ceased, and signs were hung on Jewish houses declaring them "state property" - that is, all Jewish property was confiscated for the state. The Jews were also barred from free movement on the street and anyone who violated this decree was shot on the spot.

In those days they began to recruit people and make them do various jobs: tending vegetable gardens, cleaning work, repairing roads, etc. The people were organized in columns and rows of six. At the head of the columns and at the end of

them were Gentiles. The people worked all day until evening. The remuneration was beatings, curses, and abuse. These jobs lasted about a week. Suddenly the horrifying message came, which, in truth, was expected to come. The residents were ordered to gather, in a minimum amount of time, in convergence areas, some in the central market, and some near the "Balachi bridge" in order to abandon the town altogether. To where? This was the question posed by all, and there was no answer. Here and there rumors spread that the direction was the Dniester. The fate of the Jews living in the surrounding villages was bitter.

They were cut off from the town without mail or telephone and were in constant fear of what was to come. Rumors reached them about nearby Yedinitz. My uncle Yankel, his wife Hantze, and their children, Moshe and Chana, lived in a village called Kuret, one of the villages in the vicinity of Yedinitz. In the end, the terrible fate befell them as well - expulsion, robbery, killing and rape.



The Expulsion

The date for the beginning of deportations beyond the Dniester from camps and ghettos in Bessarabia and Bukovina was determined by Antonescu in his meeting with the governors on September 15, 1941. From data given to Antonescu on the number and location of the camps and the number of Jews being held there, it also became clear that no German soldier had dealt with this expulsion. It was all an internal Romanian affair. The deportations began on September 16, 1941, after our exile from Yedinitz. Yedinitz became a refugee camp and a ghetto for Jews from other towns and villages, as did other villages and towns. The deportation from Yedinitz began at the beginning of July 1941. In all the camps, hundreds of Jews died every day from starvation, thirst, beatings and torture. Women who resisted rape were murdered, and Jews were also murdered by others searching for their valuables.



My Memories of the Expulsion

After the murders, the robbery, and the rape, the order came.

At the beginning of July 1941, the deportation began from Yedinitz. As a ten-year-old boy who had never left the town, I was "enchanted" by the expulsion and leaving the boundaries of our town and our new home, which we had renovated during the short reign of the Soviets, between June 1940 and June 1941. It was a fairly handsome house, by the standards of those days. In this house, my father dug a deep hole, and put in a large copper container. (Such containers my father made himself, that were used for making powidl - the jam made from plums that were abundant in their season.) Into the container, my father put the valuables and possessions we had left in the hope that if we returned home "soon," as the Romanians had promised us, we would find the hidden property.

My father covered the pit with earth and camouflaged it. With us we took a few valuable items, which we packed in sacks together with a few pieces of clothing. A satchel for Father, a satchel for Mother, who held my brother Shimon who was about three and a half years old, and a satchel for me. We locked up the house in the false hope that the expulsion was temporary and that we would soon return home.

"As a gesture of good will," the Romanians, on the deportation day, provided the Jews with horse-drawn wagons with Gentiles driving them. The Jews loaded possessions onto the wagons, and the elderly and children mounted them as well. These wagons accompanied us a long way, out of town.

I will never forget how my father put my brother Shimon and I on a wagon, and he held on to it and followed it, while holding my trembling hand. A Romanian, one of the escorts of the deportation convoy, holding a long stick, approached my father and without a word began to beat him with all his might, screaming, "Yid! Leave the cart alone and run forward!"

Our crying and my father's cries of pain did not deter the Romanian from continuing to beat him all over his body. Finally, seeing that my father would not leave us, he let him be. Wounded and bleeding, to the sound of our wails, my father continued to hold my hand. When I saw this sight, I was no longer "enchanted" by the idea of leaving our town Yedinitz.



There Once Was

There was once an innocent boy
Like many others the world enjoyed
He walked among people
Most good, but many evil

His childhood was negated
Cut short by hatred
He swiftly matured
No childhood endured

The games and the laughter
Had no happily ever after
Instead the sky grew dark
And murkiness embarked

No more sunlight
Blinding our sight
No more moon, no stars
They have all gone afar

Wrenching wails and lamentation
Waft from an entire nation
Praying that the gates of Zion
Will open fleetly, end our crying

And although God is good
Opening the gates as he should
In Eden there sojourn
Countless children, barely born

היה היה

היה היה ילד תם,
מיני רבים בעולם,
התהלך בין אנשים,
-מה טובים, אך גם רעים.

ילדותו הקצובה,
באיבה נקטעה,
פתע הילד "בגר",
מהילדות דבר לא נותר.

השעשוע והצחוק,
מה נראו - רחוק, רחוק,
במקומם ענן ירד,
וערפל את המבט.

עין השמש נעצמה,
פתע עיוורה - לא ראתה,
גם ירח, כוכבים,
מה הליטו הפנים.

קולות נהי ודאבה,
נשאו אל-על, מפי אומה,
בתפילה, בלב נמהר,
כי יפתח לה את השער.

-ואמנם האל נאות...
ופתח את הדלתות.
אך, - לגן עדן, בו שוהים,
רבבות הילדים.

Soon we felt that hell was just beginning and that the promise of a quick return home was a mirage and a deception. At a certain distance outside the town, all the elders and children were taken off the wagons and ordered to join the walking deportation convoy.

It was the summer of 1941. The oppressive heat, the hunger, the thirst, and the fatigue immediately made their mark. Old people, children and the frail began to lag behind, falling to the ground from weakness and dying on the sides of the roads. The Romanians were responsible for the deportation, but their genuine objective was the gradual extermination of the Jews by starvation, water deprivation, etc. Every straggler was shot on the spot. And in this manner, we walked for a long time without rest.

One day, towards evening, we reached a field. The Romanians shouted, "Sit!" People did not sit down, but literally fell to the ground. We were hungry and thirsty, but worst of all was the debilitating fatigue. With the pack on my back, a thin, weak child, I fell to the earth with my family. I fell asleep immediately – nearly comatose. My mother held on to my brother Shimon. For the most part I walked hand in hand with my father. A very short time later, shouts were heard from the edge of the deportation convoy, "Yids - get up!" Shouts accompanied by murderous blows. People got up in a panic and tried to

be swallowed up in the procession, in order to escape the bashing descending on the people at the edges of the convoy. My mother, tired and broken, held my brother Shimon in her arms and, with the pack on her back, began to walk. Everyone started to move forward. Darkness was already falling.

After a short time, my mother noticed that I was not with them. She asked my father, "Where is Moshe?" My father, who thought that after he woke me I had followed him, realized that I indeed was not with him. My father was panicked and frightened. In the dark, while running amok against the stream of people, he miraculously arrived at the place where he found me lying asleep. It was almost at the end of the convoy. It turns out that after my father woke me up, from sheer exhaustion, I fell back asleep. I felt people stepping on me, on my body and head, but I did not wake up. You should know that anyone seen lagging behind was shot instantaneously. My father picked me up immediately and carried me in his arms. If he had arrived just minutes later, there would be no one to write this book.

With the onset of the cruel deportation, we passed through the lost towns of Jews - ravaged towns, whose inhabitants had passed through all stratum of hell and had been cast out. When we reached a ransacked and devastated town, we settled in the demolished houses for a short time, until the deportation continued. The first thing we looked for in these

towns was water. In one of the towns I saw for the first time, a tap affixed in the wall - providing water. It was a wonder to me, since in Yedinitz, my town, water was brought from the wells by the water carrier.

The commander of the Legion of Gendarmes - "Hotin" - gave Lieutenant Augustine Roshka, who led the expulsion of Jews from Yedinitz and Soroka, a verbal order: Two days before the departure of each convoy, to send a local gendarme who would, together with the gendarmerie stations along the route of the deportation, dig a pit every ten kilometers for about 100 people, in which they would collect and bury all those who did not keep up with the convoy and were shot to death.

Because of the arrangements that were made to prepare the pits and perform the burial, the peasants from the villages along the route of the deportees discovered what was about to happen and used to wait on the sides of the roads, in the corn fields, and in all kinds of hiding places for the slayings. Then they would pounce on the corpses and ransack them.

Lieutenant Roshka, who commanded the convoys of the deportees, added that preparations for the deportation and even more so the execution of the orders, shocked him and his men and caused them "moments so dramatic" that they would be etched deeply and interminably in their memories.

As for the "humanity" of certain individuals, I would like to mention a few events that took place during the deportation. In one of the cases, during the deportation, there was a particularly sadistic gendarme who was extremely cruel to the deportees. I remember suddenly a car passed by with some Germans in it. A Jew from the deportation convoy, who knew German, approached one of the Germans and complained to him about the cruelty of the gendarme. The German officer got out of the car and angrily called the gendarme, who in turn approached the German officer, jumped to attention and saluted. The German officer fiercely scolded the gendarme for being cruel to the convoy. The gendarme didn't understand a word, but he did understand that he had to restrain himself.

There was another episode in which several Gentiles came to the side of the road carrying bread and some other food items. Their intention was to trade the groceries for belongings of the deportees. When they saw the miserable caravan crying to the heavens, they crossed themselves in the name of Jesus and divided the food without asking for anything in return.

Another incident I remember on one of the days of the expulsion, which was a particularly exhausting day, was that we inexplicably encountered half a sack of cornmeal. My mother ordered me to carry the sack of cornmeal on my back. I told her, "Mama, I cannot lift it," but she insisted that I lift it

onto my back and I did so with the last of my strength. You will recall that on my back was also the regular pack I carried with me. I picked up the sack with unfathomable strength. The bag was heavier than I was. The discovery was a lifesaver for us. At the stations we cooked Zondera (a thin porridge made from cornmeal) in a German steel helmet, many of which were scattered along the way.

In the context of the "devoted treatment" of the Romanians in the expulsion, you will remember that I mentioned that on 30.8.1941, an agreement was signed between Germany and Romania regarding the use of the area between the Dniester river and the Dnieper river. Clause 7 of that agreement deals with the fate of the Jews in the camps and ghettos in Bessarabia and Bukovina, and of the local Jews in Transnistria. The agreement also confirms that the Romanians were supposed to be responsible for solving the Jewish problem.

The convoys of Jews moving from place to place toward the Dniester were accompanied by a small number of gendarmes, policemen and soldiers, who could not prevent an uprising or escape. Nevertheless, no escape of Jews from the deportation convoys in the area of Bessarabia and Bukovina has ever been reported. The convoys of the deportees provided the Jews with some relative security. Outside the convoys, an agonizing death awaited them if they were caught on the part of the

Gentiles or soldiers in the area. The hostile Christian world in Bessarabia and northern Bukovina was completely closed to Jews.

As opposed to the first stage of extermination, in which there was some Nazi influence on the decisions of Antonescu, the responsibility for the second stage of the extermination of the Jews in Romania fell entirely on Ion Antonescu, his partners in power, and the Romanian army. The deportations were implemented by Antonescu's personal decision, out of a desire to completely purge the liberated territories of Jews.

The Prime Minister's Office stated in a special memorandum that it prepared for Antonescu that the deportations from Bessarabia and Bukovina were executed in order to "placate the honor of the Romanian people," which was blemished by the attitude of the Jews towards the army and the citizens of Romania. At the peak of the expulsion operation, Ion Antonescu informed his people of his aggressive decision "to punish the Jews for their crimes against the nation and the army, in the land of our forefathers, which has been reconquered." In his special style he added, "No one and nothing can stop me for as long as I live from completing the purification operations." Although German army officers claimed that the solution to the Jewish problem had been put into "the wrong hands," Hitler was very pleased with the Romanian handling of the problem.

In August 1941 he told Goebbels, "As far as the Jewish problem is concerned, you can say that a man like Antonescu works in a much more extreme way than we have done so far."

The deportation guidelines stipulated that the expulsion would be done without any exact procedures. A representative of the Romanian General Staff - Major Tarleff - circulated a second order. It was issued from the war headquarters to the gendarmerie officers responsible for transporting the convoys from the camps to the Dniester. The order was brief and clear - the Jews who could not keep pace with the convoy, either because of weakness or because of illness, would be executed.



The Path of Torment



June 1942. Jews waiting on the banks of the Dniester River, prior to their deportation to the Transnistria ghettos.

Of the 5-6 thousand Jews of the town of Yedinitz, approximately one thousand were murdered during the first two weeks of the renewal of Romanian rule. Those remaining were deported. Concentrated at the departure points, the deportees turned their eyes one final time to the town in which they were born and spent their life - they and their fathers, for generations. They left behind them plundered houses and blood clotted in the streets of the town. The Romanians established a concentration camp in Yedinitz for deportees - Jews from other places. According to what the deported Jews of Yedinitz

wrote on the walls of their homes, the deportees from other places who came to fill the concentration camp - which was established by the authorities in the abandoned town – could learn what happened here. The inscriptions read: "Here sixty-one Jews were slaughtered in one night" "Here the fascist executioners murdered my whole family" or "Revenge! This is our last request." It could be discerned that some of the writing was done in human blood.

There are no mortal words to describe the path of torment that led to the Dniester crossing and in stations that we passed on the way to the "destination."

From Yedinitz we passed through the villages of Rossian, Goliana, Korpól, Kalimaza, and from there to Ataci. The whole way the villagers stood and watched the convoy of the wretched. From Ataci we crossed the Dniester to Mohyliv - on the Ukrainian side of the Dniester. From Mohyliv we were expelled to Yampol, and from Yampol we crossed the Dniester once again back in the direction of Bessarabia – to the Casauti forest.

Since the deportation convoys disturbed the movement of the German army, they demanded that the Romanians return the deportees to Bessarabia. We crossed the bridge over the Dniester in the middle of the night, to the sounds of booing

and even falling into the river. I remember the bridge that was made of logs with a gap between them. On the day after the Dniester crossing, we reached a desolate field. The Romanian officers set up several tables in the middle of it and ordered every man and woman to remove all their gold or silver jewelry - rings and earrings as well as any amount of money. They were ordered to lay everything on the tables, and anyone who deceived them and left jewelry in their clothes would be put to death. Thus, the little that could still be traded for a piece of bread was taken. Then they marched us on gravel roads, with the farmers standing by the side of the road, watching the parade of death and hearing the cries of despair, "Water, water, bring us some water." After the round-the-clock march, the rest of the deportees came to the Casauti forest, and from there to the town of Vertiujeni on the banks of the Dniester (on the Bessarabia side) - the transit camp and the affliction of the deported Bessarabian Jews, since the expulsions began in the summer of 1941, close to Tisha B'Av.

The Book of Lamentations also described the reality of life for many Jews: "Hear, I pray, all you nations, and behold my pain; my maidens and my youths have gone into captivity" (Lamentations 1:18). "See, O Lord, and behold, to whom [else] have You done thus! In the streets, on the [bare] ground lie [both] young and old, my maidens and my young men have fallen by the sword" (2:20, 2:21). Requite them, O Lord,

according to the work of their hands" (3:64). "They dogged our steps [and prevented us] from walking in the streets; our end drew near, our days were fulfilled, for our end had come" (4:18). "Behold and see our disgrace. Our heritage has been turned over to strangers, our houses to aliens" (5:1, 5:2). "They have outraged women in Zion [and] maidens in the cities of Judah" (5:11).

The situation of the survivors in the first wave of the extermination was very similar to that described in Lamentations. The comparison only increased the pain and despair. In the first batch of Jews from various towns in Bessarabia, who were brought to the Casauti forest, they organized themselves to pray "Shabbat Chazon" – the sabbath before Tisha B'Av – the Shabbat in which we read Isaiah chapter 1 - "the vision of Isaiah ben Amotz." The horrifying stops in the forests of Casauti and Kustizny and in the towns of Ataci and Vertiujeni on the west bank of the Dniester took place in the autumn with rains, winds and storms accompanying the wretched convoys, whipping their faces and penetrating their bones mercilessly. Above all, the Romanian soldiers abused them. It is no wonder that thousands died on the way, without burial, before they arrived at "their destination" - the eastern bank of the Dniester.

Near the Kustizny Forest, some two hundred people crowded into one barn. Hunger and thirst increased and there was no

drinking water. They had the "luck" of winter being in full force and the roof of the barn being covered with snow and ice. From the roof, the people took icicles and each sipped at them to quench their thirst slightly. That too they could only do at night, while the guards were asleep. They also took advantage of the nighttime hours and the darkness to sneak through the barbed wire fence around the cowshed, and to raid the fields in order to collect some potatoes and other vegetables – what remained on the field, after the farmers had completed their harvest. There were those who also managed to reach the farmers' houses in the nearby village, and in exchange for silver or other valuables to obtain a loaf of bread or a bucket of potatoes, to silence their constant hunger.



The Vertiujeni Camp

The Vertiujeni camp was erected by the Romanian authorities in August 1941. This was a destroyed and pillaged Jewish town on the banks of the Dniester. It was one of the difficult stops for deportees. The town had been abandoned by its Jewish inhabitants previously, who fled to the Russian side of the Dniester. The houses were found looted by the farmers of the area. The refugees from Yedinitz and other destroyed towns were pressed into the desolate Vertiujeni camp like herring into a barrel - about twenty-six thousand people, without water or food. About two or three hundred people died every day. People walked along the town paths, collapsed and fell. A few wells that were in the town were polluted and even poisoned.

The town was surrounded by a fence to separate the Jewish residents from the non-Jewish ones in the vicinity. Nevertheless, the Romanian guards could not prevent people from assembling on both sides of the fence. Every day there was bartering between the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews sold everything they had left: clothes, shoes, shoelaces. Everything was sold and exchanged for a loaf of bread, some beets, potatoes – everything was snapped up. People sold everything down to their last shirt. So it was not surprising that there were those who walked around dressed in sacks, rags,

and even wrapped in paper - hungry and shivering from the cold. The latter had no more possibility of obtaining a piece of bread, to quiet their hunger. To somehow help those people, a collection was taken up by "the wealthy" to donate to them.

Severe dysentery broke out in this camp, from the contaminated and poisoned water wells. Our family managed to settle in a basement apartment that was once a bakery. At the bottom of the cellar there was a well, which apparently had not been poisoned and so we had clean drinking water. The dysentery and diarrhea spread throughout the camp. People collapsed on the streets of the town. I remember how the corpses were collected on improvised ladders, with diarrhea steadily dripping from them.

At this deportation station, among the rubble we set out to commemorate Yom Kippur. On the night of Kol Nidre the men gathered in the ruin that used to be a synagogue. The prayer took place standing in the demolished structure, without a door and a window. On Yom Kippur, in the middle of prayer, Romanian soldiers appeared and forced the worshipers to go work. "In honor of" the holy day, the soldiers were mischievous. The work was carrying rocks up and down the mountain for no reason, just to make the Jews' holy day "more pleasant." Many fell and collapsed, unable to stand the malicious task.

The horror in Vertiujeni was so great that the camp commander,

Sando Alexander Constantinescu, decided to resign. He was shocked by the Jewish convoys that had been sent back from the Ukraine and reached Vertiujeni. They were in horrific condition, in a state of exhaustion that cannot be described - an impossible tangle of human beings - sick and dying women, children, girls and men. "Before my eyes," described Constantinescu, "people died, others fainted, women gave birth, and everyone was covered with lice and abscesses." Constantinescu was indeed relieved of his post. His case serves as proof that it was possible, under the Antonescu regime, if not to help the Jews, at least to refrain from active participation in the crimes against them. Constantinescu even obtained a little bit of food for the prisoners.

On September 2, 1941, another reserve officer was appointed to be the commander of the camp – Colonel Vasile Agapie. He remained in this position until the liquidation of the camp in early October 1941. With the appointment of Agapie, any attempts to help the Jews in the camp was thwarted. From that moment on and until the deportation, the lives of twenty-six thousand Jews were dependent on the whims, cruelty, and desires of four Romanians: Colonel Agapie; his deputy Captain Radulescu; Captain Buradescu, who oversaw discipline and was particularly active in confiscating valuables from the Jews; and Ioan Mihaiescu, an official of the National Bank of Romania. Agapie was quickly revealed to be an expert on extorting silver

and jewelry from Jews. This was in addition to the robberies in the name of the Romanian state that were carried out in all the Jewish camps.

A week after taking office, Agapie sent his subordinate to the city of Iasi – a civil law administrator named Petra Nicolao. Nicolao addressed the Jewish community in the city of Iasi, introduced himself as a member of the State Prosecutor's Office, and in the name of the commander of the Vertiujeni Brigade requested help for the Jews imprisoned in the camp, describing to the community members the severity of their situation. The Iasi community was nearly paralyzed, after the riots that took place at the end of June 1941, during which at least fourteen thousand people were murdered. Most of the affluent members of the community had been murdered, and even if the community wanted to, it was barely able to provide for its own needs and sustain the thousands of widows and orphans who were left destitute. Nevertheless, the heads of the community conducted an emergency collection of about two hundred thousand lei, and also contacted the Federation in Bucharest, which sent a sum of three hundred thousand lei. Not a penny of this money reached the Jewish committee that was set up in the Vertiujeni camp.

Agapie's second initiative was related to the exploitation of the remaining Jewish labor force in the village. He set up a soap

factory, using the facilities of the oil factory that had belonged to the Jewish village. He sold the soap to the peasants in the area and kept all the income.

Agapie imposed a levy of 2 lei on every Jew who wanted to exchange things with a Romanian farmer, and also limited the barter hours. I remember that among us there was a Jewish amputee with a certain charisma, who understood the nature of the Romanian officers. He would collect bribes from the Jews for Agapie, as well as objects of exchange for food, and go to the camp's fence and perhaps beyond it, in order to bring a bit of food for Jews.

When the gendarmes in the camp understood that their commander, Agapie, would do anything to get rich, their discipline levels dropped dramatically. They began to mimic Agapie and demanded a daily bribe as well, to free Jews from the jobs that Agapie had assigned in the camp.

Starvation, lack of drinking water, living in squalor, lice, corpses that piled up by the hundreds every day, rape of young women, torture used to obtain jewelry, abuse on the part of the gendarmes - all these made the place a terror camp.

A power struggle broke out between Agapie and the commander of the gendarmerie station in Vertiujeni. He complained in writing about Agapie, so an investigation was

conducted in the third military corps. The testimonies collected by the interrogating officer in 1942 and the testimonies given at the trial of the camp commanders in 1945 are the authentication that underlies this research. It should be noted that in most cases written reports were avoided at all levels, in order to erase the traces of robbery and murder. It was only in investigations such as these that matters were raised in writing for the purpose of reporting associated with the mutual complaints.

Agapie's aides were far crueler than him. When Buradescu entered the camp, all the prisoners would run away, like birds hiding from a hawk. He was surrounded by fear and terror. He would beat and swear. He too invented methods of extortion and property theft, especially jewelry. Buradescu supervised the discipline.

The deputy commandant of the camp, Radulescu, and an additional officer, used to organize orgies every night in their homes and even in the camp. They would choose beautiful girls, bring them to their apartments, and the girls would scream and cry all night, according to the landlords of the rented houses that were leased to Romanian officers. Jewish girls committed suicide after they were returned to the camp. Rape of women and girls was common among the gendarmes as well, and they would rape them in front of their families.



The Expulsion from Vertiujeni

We had been in Vertiujeni about three months, when on a cloudy autumn day came the order. General Tobur ordered the deportation of the Jews of the camp, in transports of about 800 people. Colonel Mukoleski sent the camp commander an order regarding the evacuation of the Jews from Vertiujeni. Together with the official order, Mukoleski gave a verbal order to the reserve captain, Victor Ramden. Through Ramden, he also sent instructions to Agapie and added that it was permissible to shoot the Jews of the camp "while working." The mortality rate at this point rose to 200-300 people a day. The Jews were greatly weakened by hunger, diseases, and abuse. Many of the babies and the elderly died.

Vertiujeni was built as follows: There was a lot in the middle, and alleyways branched around it. Rumors circulated among the Jews that in this alleyway or another, people were returning home. As I recall, the Jews began to trade among themselves: "Whoever wants to move to an alleyway where "for sure" its people return home to Yedinitz have to pay such and such."

My Uncle Yankel and his wife Hantze and their children Hanna and Moshe, like my aunt Malka, her husband, Pisia, and their three children lived in a certain alley together.

We were in another alley. In light of the rumors that they were returning home, they asked us for the keys to our home in Yedinitz, since they were sure - according to the rumors - that they were going home.

When it was our turn to leave the camp, I remember, it was a dark, rainy, and cold day. At the exit from the town, Gentiles or soldiers stood with a samovar of hot, sweet tea and gave each person a cup of the tea, with a quarter of a fresh black bread.

It tasted like heaven to drink the sweet tea with the bread. I do not know why they did it. My guess is that they knew that for many Jews it would be their last meal, and we did learn later, that some of the deportees were evacuated to the Casauti forest, and there were shot to death, among them my Uncle Yankel and my Aunt Malka with their families. We have not seen them since.



The Process of the Expulsion from Vertiujeni

The pace of walking about 30 kilometers a day was meticulously adhered to, and the gendarmes did not allow any respite, not even to drink water.

Stopping for the night was in an open field. (The indictment against the camp commanders, in their trial after the war, sums up simply: "The convoys of the miserable deportees, exhausted by hunger and disease and robbed of their possessions, continued to flow into the death zone - Transnistria. The gendarmes made them run with roars and blows, until they achieved their long-awaited rest - in the Casauti forest.")

Casauti was one of the transit stations to Transnistria. The most difficult experience for the Jews, before crossing the rickety bridge laid by the Romanian army in Casauti, was the crossing and the night stop of several nights in the Casauti forest.



The Casauti Forest

The route of the convoys that were deported to Transnistria, was via the bridge opposite the Casauti village, and through the Casauti forest - a large dense forest that stretched on the hills parallel to the river. This route, was chosen in order to bypass the city of Soroka to the east, and to avoid walking on the main road. The night stops in the Casauti forest allowed the gendarmes to regulate the passage of the Jews on the bridge to Transnistria and keep them far away from the eyes of the population, until the bridge cleared. They then led the convoy quickly to the bridge, and the guards also changed shifts.

The gendarmes that left Marcolesti would return to bring another delivery.

The stops were in the forest, near a brick-burning facility, close to a small ravine. When the convoys began to arrive from Marcolesti, Jewish corpses were already lying there from previous convoys. The valley began to serve as a place of convergence to dispose of the bodies of Jews who died of exhaustion, were shot by the gendarmes, or murdered by the peasants. The valley of corpses was beginning to fill up at the beginning of October, when the first convoys arrived from Yedinitz. The gendarmes preferred to shoot all the exhausted people, "out of compassion," as one of them testified.

30.1.1995

The Valley of the Dead

In the valley of the dead
The bitter stones stand abed
Silently seething
Mourning and grieving

To the end of days
All who passed that way
Will remain in the stones
Their ashes, their bones

Underneath them the soil
Like lava will boil
Spewing in anger
Erupting with clangor

They walk and wonder
How they are left asunder
No liberation
Just eternal damnation

Sounds erased
By silence replaced
No longer heard
Muted and blurred

The voices they roared
Oh save us dear God
They desperately called
"Shema Yisrael"

But their fervent prayer
Met with only despair
They were not saved
Their path not paved

30.1.1995

גיא הריגה

בגיא הריגה,
אבנים עשונות,
נצבות בתוגה,
באלם זועקות.
עד קץ הימים,
כל הלך וזר,
בינות אבנים,
עשונות כאפר.

מתחתן אדמה,
תגעש במרקחת,
כי לכה לכה,
בזעם רותחת.
יהלך ויתמה,
איכה וכיצד,
מענה ותשובה,
לא תגיע לעד.

קולות עלומים,
משאול נשיה,
לא נשמעים,
שתיקתם רועמה.

גרונות נחרים,
למושיע גואל,
קולם מרימים;
- "שמע ישראל!"

לדאבון לבב,
תפלתם הזפה,
התמה מרוב,
- לא נתקבלה.

In the Casauti forest, abominable acts were committed, as most of the survivors who passed through wrote. A stop there of a few days turned the place into a terrifying camp in itself. In the duress and the dark that prevailed even during the day, children were lost to their mothers and wives to their husbands. Families would gather and set up improvised tents, or spread a sheet between the branches so they could find each other.

In this forest horrific scenes took place - open graves of masses of Jews, skeletons stacked on top of each other. Dogs set upon the ravine and a terrible stench rose from it. In this valley there were about 10,000 corpses of those who could not continue on their way because of exhaustion and had died there.

A witness recalls, "The deportees who camped at the beginning of November in the forest had already gone through the snow and had seen many thousands of dead deportees on the road as well as in the forest. I saw a sight that cannot be forgotten. A boy who pulled hard on his dead mother's garment and shouted again and again, 'Mama, Mama!' as if he wanted to wake her. The convoy gathered the children who had been left, as well as the ill to shelter they had contrived from tree branches but could not help them. Convoys that camped there before the rains came discerned spates of blood everywhere." In the forest we discovered two open mass graves, that held men, women and children, laid naked on top of each other. We

asked the commander of the gendarmes to allow us to cover the pits. The commander replied that there was no need for that because we too would get there. At night we heard whimpers and shouts, as the soldiers beat and looted the people.

The next day we continued on foot and reached the Dniester. We crossed the river over a very narrow bridge. Many fell into the water, and some were thrown into the water by the soldiers, whenever they so desired.

The stop in the Casauti forest, even for just one night, immediately injured the small children, who were sick, hungry and exhausted. In the camps their parents did everything to keep them alive, but in the forest, they could no longer save them. Thousands of them would fall asleep, and in the morning, it turned out that they had died of cold. A survivor relays, "We arrived at Casauti. It was raining, we were all shivering, and we walked back and forth. We heard a loud, agonizing cry of children. The crying grew weaker and weaker until it fell silent. Several children died in the arms of their mothers, who thought that the children were asleep. It is nearly impossible to believe that something like this really happened, and yet it did. It was heartbreaking to see the children who had to continue on their way and abandon their exhausted parents to a certain death. While we all shivered in the forest, the Romanian soldiers sat by a campfire and got drunk.

On November 10, 1941, the deportation of Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina ended, and they were concentrated at the transit points to Transnistria: Ataci, Casauti, and Rezina. Our transit point was Casauti.

Despite the fact that at all the looting points, a representative of the Romanian National Bank was present, who was needed in order to transfer the property, money, jewelry, etc, the lion's share of the surviving property was "absorbed" by the robbers - the gendarmes, the officers, the peasants, and certainly the corrupt bank officials. Much information about this is available due to inquiry commissions who investigated complaints that the Romanian National Bank "did not acquire any property." Thanks to these investigations, which were raised in writing, we have a great deal of information on this matter. In general, orders and instructions were given verbally so as not to leave traces and evidence.



The Yedinitz Camp

Camps like Vertiujeni were many, and I would like to linger on the Yedinitz camp - the city of my birth - to which we had expected and hoped to return one day, to our home, as our oppressors had promised us, both at the beginning of the expulsion from Yedinitz and before the deportation from Vertiujeni.

According to a book by Professor Jean Ancel, Yedinitz was a Jewish town in the province of Khotin. In 1930 5,341 Jews lived there, about 90% of its total population. With the outbreak of the war, the Soviet army withdrew from the town, and took with it several senior government officials. An unknown number of Jews decided to abscond, but most of the Jews remained there. On July 2, 1941, Romanian and German paratroopers were parachuted onto a hill near the cemetery and from there the town was invaded. The Jews then fled from Yedinitz. Groups left for Sokyriany, where they were imprisoned and then deported in convoys, accompanied by gendarmes, to Otaci, intending to cross the Dniester and proceed to the Ukraine. They were too late, as we will later see.

The Romanian soldiers who entered the town of Yedinitz opened fire to frighten everyone, and then broke into homes and murdered hundreds of Jews. The Jews gathered their

families and closed themselves in the houses. The soldiers incited the local Christian population to loot the Jews, saying the Jews were no longer relevant and that their property was forfeited. The Romanian soldiers and the Christian residents of Yedinitz participated in the murders and rape, as did peasants from surrounding villages. The property that was not pillaged was confiscated for the benefit of the Romanian state.

A week later, during which the men were taken into forced labor, everyone was divided into two groups and were taken past Rezina and toward Sokyriany, to Briceni, back to Yedinitz, and so on. The Jews who fled the town at the outbreak of the war and did not manage to cross into the Soviet Union, found themselves in a large convoy of 25,000 Jews, forced by the Germans to cross the Dniester back to Bessarabia at the end of July 1941. The remnants of the convoy were interned in the Vertiujeni camp.

After the Jews of Yedinitz were expelled from their town, they set up a transit camp for Jews from other areas. These included Jews from northern Bukovina, who had already been expelled from their villages and towns in mid-July, and moved in convoys beyond the Dniester as well. They had been previously concentrated in the Storozhynets camp together with Jews from Bessarabia, who the Germans did not allow passage to Transnistria. There were also Jews from Chernivtsi that were

deported by marching to the Yedinitz camp.

Yedinitz was in a high place, and the walking was difficult and exhausting. The climbers sank into deep mud. Old men and women who could not pull their feet out of the mud were shot to death by the gendarmes. Families were separated in the darkness. Mothers lost their children, everyone was hungry, and on the way, they were ransacked by peasants.

A camp was established in the town - a sort of ghetto. The Jews crowded into the looted and ruined houses of the Jews of Yedinitz, who were no longer there. The men were taken away to forced labor there.

In the starving and plundered town, sickness ensued. On September 20, 1941, typhus broke out and the local police chief called the camp committee and warned them that if the epidemic spread, he would give an instruction to shoot all the Jews.

The first transport, which numbered 10,000 Jews out of a convoy of 13,000, most of them from northern Bukovina, reached Yedinitz after being curbed by the Germans in Otaci. Some 3,000 Jews were drowned in the Dniester by the gendarmes who accompanied them. The gendarmes forced them into the water and shot them with machine guns. Within

a few minutes the river turned red. This batch reached Yedinitz in a terrible state of mind, especially after the arduous climb to the Yedinitz ridge.

A survivor who was in the Yedinitz concentration camp relayed, "Within a few hours people became animals. I stepped on corpses. Children fell from their mothers' arms, husbands lost their wives, and one thought overcame everyone - the desire to stay alive."

On September 10, 1941, Colonel Mankutza reported, "Most of the Jews are without clothes and they have nothing to cover themselves." The majority of them were sent back from the Ukraine by the Germans, and all their belongings were taken from them. Large numbers of them were barefoot, and scores were walking around nearly naked, covered with newspaper or wrapping paper.

The most difficult problem in the Yedinitz camp was the lack of drinking water. There were several wells, but all but one was poisoned by the residents and gendarmes to withhold water from the Jews. Most of the Jews drank from the rain water that accumulated in two pits in the ground. Others drank from the poisoned wells and developed dysentery. In addition to thirst, the inmates suffered from an infestation of lice. The unbearable hunger propelled many Jews to eat the bark of the

trees, or any weeds they found among the houses. Among the Jews were many doctors, but in the absence of medicines and basic cleaning materials - like water, soap, and kerosene – the diseases and epidemics spread and killed the already poisoned Jews, especially the little children.

I lingered here on the description of the Yedinitz camp and ghetto - my hometown - but such camps and ghettos were scattered throughout Bessarabia. From places where they expelled the Jews, they brought Jews from another town, who encountered a ruined and pilfered place, after the peasants and the local inhabitants had destroyed and robbed everything they managed to lay their hands on.

The fate of all deportees from every ghetto was horrific: murder, robbery, rape, unending and merciless abuse was the fate of the deportees. I remember our expulsion from Yedinitz after the torrent of murders, robbery, rape, and abuse. It is impossible to describe the feeling when people suddenly change from being human beings to being a herd of cattle - and worse.



The Marculesti Camp

We did not pass through this concentration camp, but I see fit to briefly relay what took place there. Marculesti, like Vertiujeni, was a Jewish town that was looted, destroyed, and drowned in the blood and the corpses of its inhabitants, which numbered some 2,319 Jews before June 1941. The ravaging of the Jews of this town was like what happened to all the Jews of Bessarabia – plundering and sadistic and beastly murder - without restraint - of men, women and children.

Jews did not try to escape because there was nowhere to run. Outside, the cruel peasants were waiting for them, who spared no measures to avenge, kill, and pillage everything possible. Jews from Bukovina, from Chernivtsi, and more were brought to Marculesti. They were allowed to take as many things with them as they could, in order to have something to rob from them. They were brought in sealed railroad cars, frighteningly crowded, without food and water. Some of their route beyond the Dniester crossing was done on foot under conditions of robbery and murder typical of the Romanian gendarmes and officers. Descriptions of the abuse of the expelled Marculesti residents sound imaginary and horrible, both on the part of the Romanian soldiers and on the part of the blood-thirsty peasants. Revenge and especially looting and robbery, without

restraint and without any pangs of conscience, were committed both towards adults and towards children.

An interesting fact that justifies bringing this up this point is that residents of Marculesti, who were almost all Jews, tried with the outbreak of fighting and retreat of the Red Army to flee with the Russians, but the Russians prevented them from crossing the Dniester. This happened in many places, despite the Jew's loyalty to the Soviet rule at the time.

These were the routes of our wanderings from Yedinitz to Verhovka in the Ukraine: From Yedinitz we were deported on foot to the villages of Rossian, Goliana, Korpul, Kalimaza, Ataci, and beyond the Dniester for the first time to Mohyliev on the Ukrainian side of the Dniester. Then from Mohyliv to Yampol. From Yampol we were brought back through the Dniester to Moldova to the Casauti forest. From Casauti to Vertiujeni. From Vertiujeni to Casauti. From Casauti we passed over the Dniester a second time to Yampol on the Ukrainian side of the Dniester. From Yampol through Kryzhopol to Obodovka. From Obodovka to a cowshed in Stratovka, and from there to Verhovka - until the liberation by the Russians.

As I said, after Vertiujeni we returned to Casauti. I already wrote about the tribulations in both of these places, and now we are about to pass the Dniester again to the Ukraine. The Dniester

crossing was a tragic affair in itself. All the convoys and partial convoys were led to the Dniester crossing to the Ukraine – to Transnistria.

Many are the horror stories that took place at the Dniester crossing to the Ukraine. Some of the deportees were "lucky" and somehow reached the other bank of the river "safely," while others found their deaths among the waves, which carried the wretched corpses a great distance.

There was one especially shocking case during the passage of that convoy, and perhaps only a part of it, which had come via Vertiujeni - Casauti-Ataci. For some reason, adjacent to the crossing, they divided the deportees into two separate groups. One was turned towards Yampol, and the other to Rezina. The first group moved "safely" - us among them - while the second one was completely lost during the transition. The circumstances are unknown to this day. No one survived that group. The waves of the Dniester carried away with them the secret of their disappearance. Even our passage, the "lucky" ones, is a tragedy in itself. We were transported via emergency bridges, with whistles and curses, to the town of Yampol in Transnistria. I remember the ramshackle bridge, which was made of planks, and through the space between them you could see the raging waters of the river. From Yampol we reached Kryzhopol and from there to the town of Obodovka,

which became a temporary collection point for most of the Jewish camps that had been deported from Bessarabia.

A group of "dry bone" remnants of Bessarabian exiles arrived from all directions at the large dairy lot of Obodovka. They put us in a large beef cattle barn of one of the collective farms, where thousands of cows were raised in the past. In this abandoned barn, we found the vestige of emaciated Jews. They lay crowded together, curled up against the bitter cold. It was autumn. The building had no windows and doors. All of us lie still and silent, smitten with despair. There were occasional cheers, when family members from various exile camps, suddenly happened upon each other.

After about a week in the Obodovka barn, we were transferred to the cowshed where they raised calves - in the village of Stratovka. It was the gateway to death in every sense of the word. People died in droves from cold, from starvation, and from the typhus that was spreading. It is painful to even describe the desolation and filth of this cold, contaminated wing of hell, in the calf hut. It is difficult to recount the starvation and lice infestation, the howling winds, and the shrieks of the rats. I remember every morning at an almost fixed time, I woke up to look at a man who was lying next to us. The man was secretly taking out a piece of bread and onion, biting and hiding it, biting and hiding it...

Typhus killed many people. Every morning each family took out the dead bodies and put them on the pile of bodies in the middle of the building. The Gentiles of the area, whose situation was also not great, knew that the Jews had valuables, and so they would raid the cowshed at night and steal as much as possible. I remember one night, Gentiles entered the cowshed and found a Jew with a "diamond" - a glass cutter. The Jew, who must have been a glazier by trade, did not want to give them the "diamond," so they murdered him on the spot and took the "diamond."

I would like to emphasize here, that the fact that my family and I survived the war and the misery, healthy and in one piece, together with a large and lovely gift - my sister Zisla who was born in Transnistria - was thanks to Father. You could say that he - and only he - saved us from hell. My father, as I mentioned, was a tinsmith. The only instrument he carefully guarded were the large tin scissors, which I possess to this day. With these tin scissors, and a hammer and iron rod, he would go out to the surrounding villages at risk of death (many like him did not return). My father used to make all kinds of tin tools for the Gentiles, and even made them a grain grinder from shell casings. In payment for his work he would receive groceries, and this is in fact how he saved us from hell. Shortly before the Soviet liberation, my Uncle Benjamin of the Ackerman family, who had no profession, left with a guy who was a tailor and

did not return, leaving his wife Dina and their children Rivka and Rachel (their brother Moshe died of the Stratovka typhus). After the liberation they returned to Yedinitz without him. My aunt Dina (my father's sister) died of grief in Yedinitz after the liberation.

My cousin Beileh also died of typhus in Stratovka. She was a lovely girl, eighteen years old at death. While burning with fever she said that her only request would be to live one day with the Soviets.

As I mentioned, my cousin Moshe died of typhus at that time. He was a handsome, tall eleven-year-old boy, and since we were the same age, we were close friends and it was very painful for me when he died.

In a sharp transition, in May 1997, I gave a lecture on the Holocaust in one of the Galilee communities. After the lecture, a little girl of about six approached me, holding in her hand a notebook and a pencil, and asked me to write her a story from the Holocaust. Here is my response to Yahav's request, which will try to reflect the terrible situation in which we found ourselves.

Haifa, May 6th, 1997

Dear Yahav,

At your request, and as I promised you, I am sending you a short story about an incident that happened to me in the Holocaust. After a whole day's walk in the cold and the rain, the entire convoy of deported Jews arrived, and they housed us in a building that had once been a cowshed in a collective farm (that's like a kibbutz for Gentiles). The building had no windows and doors. Wind and rain came in and people were wet and lay crowded together because the place was too small to accommodate all the Jews. The people were lying on the small amount of hay that was there. Some people preferred to make a bonfire from the hay in order to dry their wet clothes slightly. Many people got sick and had very high fever. Many died of disease and lack of medication.

My father had such high fever that he began to hallucinate. The hunger was fierce. At night we would sneak into the fields of the farm and dig into the frozen ground with our hands in order to find traces of potatoes or carrots left after the harvest was collected. Once I, an 11-year-old boy, with a few older people, went out to the field at night. We dug with our hands and found some potatoes. On the way back, a group of Gentiles spotted us. It was at dawn. We started to run away, and they chased us. I was caught by two Gentiles, one older and the

other younger. The younger one grabbed me by my shirt, next to my neck, and told me: "Zid (Yid in Ukrainian - a derogatory name for a Jew), where do you start to cross yourself?" I knew what crossing myself was because in the town where I was born the Gentiles would cross themselves next to their church, or at their funerals, but I never noticed, and perhaps I did not remember, seeing that I was completely frightened out of my wits, exactly where a Gentile began to cross himself. In reply to his question, "Where does a Gentile begin to cross himself?" I pointed to my stomach. This was not right, so the Gentile slammed my stomach hard, took my small amount of potatoes and left me. I ran away from them crying, and in pain. I went back to the barn with an empty stomach and aching. The people who managed to escape with their potatoes, gave me a potato each. We cooked the potatoes in a German soldier's steel helmet. Helmets like these were scattered on the roads we passed, and they served as cooking pots for us.

Yahav! This is all I will say for now. I appreciate your interest in the subject of the Holocaust, and wish for you, your friends and all the children of Israel, that you grow up as proud Jews, and that a Gentile never dare lift a hand against you.

Best regards,
Moshe Glotman

So, we continued to live in Stratovka, in the terrible filth that prevailed in the calf barn, until spring.

The long-suffering winter of 1942, imprisoned in the Stratovka camp, was one of hunger and grief, and most of the refugees died of starvation and disease. The bodies were thrown into some wild hay pit or served as food for any wandering dog. When the spring came, the collective farmers took us to do agricultural jobs of all kinds: purifying warehouses, sorting vegetables, and all sorts of foul tasks that the farmers had had enough of. In fact, our work was supposed to be free of charge, but at the end of the day, each one of us managed to take some potatoes and other vegetables. There were some collective farm leaders that turned a blind eye, while they were sadists among them, who caught "spoiled" Jews and took away their "spoil," and even beat them.

My father, being a professional tinsmith, always knew how to emphasize his expertise anywhere we were. Here as well my father, along with his brother Benjamin of blessed memory (our families were together throughout the deportation), received various tin working jobs, whether it was covering roofs with tin, making various tools from tin, etc. They were even paid and appreciated for their professional work.

The Romanians and the Germans, as part of the final solution, occasionally collected groups of men and sent them to the city

of Nikolaev (the town where the Lubavitcher Rebbe was born). In Nikolaev they were employed in arduous, soul-wrenching labor. Very few returned from there.

The Ukrainian farm manager, in need of my father and brother due to their expertise and usefulness, hid them in the attic of his house when the Germans were hunting down men. It was a calculated risk on the part of the farm manager, but my father always knew how to maneuver and even reward people like him, at any time and in any place, all along our wandering route.

I remember an incident that I will never forget. It was during the expulsion, through the suffering, the hunger and the thirst. People who managed to hide some valuables as well as clothing, bartered each such object for a piece of bread. People who did not believe the Romanians that "soon we will return home," took with them while being expelled from their homes, objects and valuables that they exchanged with the Gentiles during their wanderings for a piece of bread and a little water. We - who believed that we would return home soon - buried everything in a hiding place my father dug in the house. Well, it was a hard and exhausting day of walking. Hunger and thirst piqued. Suddenly a young Gentile woman stood on the side of the deportation convoy, and in her apron held a loaf of bread. The people who noticed her rushed to her

and offered her everything they had: suits, rings, and valuables. The woman, amazed by the tempting offerings, did not know what to choose. While she wondered and was overwhelmed by the crowd, my father, who had nothing to offer her, and while we were starving to death, and who was short and agile, crawled under the crowd overtaking the woman, reached her while crawling, put his hand into her apron, took out the loaf of bread, and fled into a nearby wadi. Thus, we managed to restore our ourselves a little. He was a small man, but a great man who actually saved us from hell, with his tricks and his courage - may his memory be blessed forever!

In one case, my father "snuck" into a cornfield on the side of the road during the deportation in order to pick a few corn cobs. Suddenly he noticed a baby girl among the corn stalks, who was apparently abandoned by her mother. Who knows what happened to her.



Who Am I? (From my book, "Poetic Paths")

Who am I, and from where?
And please do you know
A baby named Anna
Wrapped in cloth white as snow

Brown are her eyes
Her mouth is so small
Her lips parched and dry
She sees nothing at all

The night is so cold
That it chills my core
The barbed wire above me
A sentry passes once more

With salty tears
She brought me here
Kissed my lips, and was gone
I know not to where

If you hear me
Mother so true
Who am I? Where are you?
Please take me with you!

Yes, she hears you, lost daughter
And her arms they are burning
A mother – a homeland
Her arms await yearning

מִי אֲנִי? (שִׁיר מִסַּפְרִי "נְתִיבֵי שִׁירָה")

יֹדְעִים אַתֶּם אֲנִי,
מִי אֲנִי, מֵהֵכָן?
תִּינוּקָה וְשִׁמָּה אֲנִי,
- עֲטוּפָה בְּלָבָן.

חֻמוֹת הַן הָעֵינַיִם,
קָטָן מְאֹד הָפָה,
יָבֵשׁוּ - מֵהַשְׁפָּתַיִם,
- הַמִּבְטָב בּוֹהָה.

קָרָא הַלֵּיל,
אֶת עֲצֻמוֹתַי שׁוֹכֵר,
מֵעַל רֹאשִׁי-הַתֵּיל,
- הִנֵּה זָקִיף עוֹבֵר.

בְּדִמְעַת עֵין,
אוֹתִי הִבִּיֵּאָה כָּאֵן,
נִשְׁקָה לִי עַל שְׁפָתַיִם,
וְהִלָּכָה - לָאֵן?

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| אִם אוֹתִי שׁוֹמְעַת, | כֵּן, אוֹתָךְ שׁוֹמְעַת, |
| אִם יוֹלֶדְתִּי, | בְּתִנּוּ הָאוֹבֶדֶת. |
| מִי אֲנִי, הֵיכָן אֶת? | זְרוּעוֹתֶיהָ לַהֵט, |
| - אֲנִי קָחִי אוֹתִי! | - אִם וְשִׁמָּה - מוֹלֶדֶת. |



The Verhovka Camp

I will return to Transnistria. By the end of the summer, those that remained from Stratovka were transferred to the nearby Jewish town of Verhovka. The town held about thirty one-story houses, built in a circle around the market lot. There were also a few desolate ruins. In the houses of Verhovka lived local Ukrainian Jews. We "invaded" their homes - not always to the satisfaction of the local residents. We squeezed into every free corner in the house. The house we entered was owned by a man named Shmarel. He, his wife and two daughters had to make do with one room in their house. The other three were occupied by the refugees.

When we reached Verhovka, there were already refugees from the Bukovina region. These were Jews from a German cultural area, and their language was German. They were brought to Transnistria, in a slightly more "dignified" manner, with less wandering about, although they also went through hell in all stages of the deportation. These Jews had special manners and pedantic characteristics that characterize the German mentality. The Jews of Bukovina did not welcome the "invasion" of the filthy and sick people, remnants of Stratovka.

In Shmarel's house several families lived in one room. We settled in the small entrance room - three families. On one

of the beds was my family, on the other was the family of my Uncle Benjamin, his wife Dina, and their daughters Rivka and Rachel. (Moshe, as I mentioned, died in Stratovka.) On the third was my uncle Benjamin, my father's brother, with his wife Leah, their daughter Tzirel and their son Zenvel. (The late Beileh, as stated, died in Stratovka.)

So, we settled in a three-by-four-meter cubicle. A man named Schwartz was appointed by the Romanians as community



Beileh Glotman – Perished
in the Holocaust



The family of my Uncle Benyamin
and Aunt Leah Glotman

leader for the deportees in Verhovka. There were different views on how he behaved and handled himself. My family and I have difficult memories about him. In my opinion, his behavior resembled that of the notorious kapos. Arrogance and domineeringness characterized him. I have a bitter memory of him. The Romanians occasionally held roll calls for men in the central square of the town Verhovka. From there, they selected men to transport to Nikolaev - a place from which only a few returned.

In Shmarel's house we built a hiding place, the entrance to which was through the attic. My father and my uncles would hide there when necessary, especially during the roll calls. In one of the cases after the roll call was finished, Schwartz noticed my father was missing.

This Schwartz, who was always elegantly dressed, and walked with ostentatious arrogance - a man "of great stature" - came to our home after the roll call, to demand money from my father for his "saving him," as it were, from the Germans and the Romanians that did the roll call. Father, who had no money to pay him, hid in the hiding place in the house. In response to Schwartz's question, "Where's is Elia Glotman?" we replied that we did not know where he was. Schwartz was livid. He found father's tin scissors, the only and most important instrument of his work, and confiscated them. Later we learned, after we

had already immigrated to Israel, that Schwartz is in Israel, and even serves in the Israeli police force. We will return to the town of Verhovka, which was our last stop before liberation by the Soviets. Soon, the community was organized. There was a synagogue, a mohel, etc. There was also a shochet (ritual slaughterer). The rabbi that I remember and will always remember was Rav Yeshayahu Elkes of Yedinitz. Rabbi Elkes was a shochet and mohel - a handsome man, and highly respected in the community. He influenced me greatly, and indeed I became religious as much as was possible.

The Hagar family, a distinguished rabbinical family from Bukovina, is known to this day. The rabbis, who were in fact the spiritual leadership of the community, established educational institutions in which the children learned Torah and arithmetic. Similarly, there was a drama club in which I participated. Rabbi Elkes prepared me personally for bar mitzvah. I was very friendly with Moshe Hagar of blessed memory, who was my age (later in Israel "the Rebbe from Ontania"). As I mentioned above, Rav Alex and Moshe Hagar influenced me greatly in becoming religious, and I would "drive my parents crazy" by peeking into the pots to check "that everything was kosher." On Fridays, I ran and collected twigs for cooking dishes for Shabbat. It was important to me that we finish cooking before Shabbat. (We did the cooking outside in a makeshift campfire between two stones.)

Religion and faith consolidated the community, though throughout the deportation and also in Verhovka there were quite a few people - including rabbis - who did not understand how God could bring such anguish to us. The only direction to aim the screams was towards the sky.

The prayers and supplications, in which I took part, expressed in their full force the pain of the people and their appeals for the end of grief and for salvation. There was a man in the town named Naphtali, who was ultra-orthodox. I remember that after many hardships, he had received some money from far away. It was Shabbat, and Naftali had to sign the receipt for the money, which he so desperately needed. Naftali did not agree under any circumstances to sign the receipt for the money on Shabbat, and the money was returned to its senders.

The following is a difficult experience that I had in Verhovka, and the subject of an article that I wrote. A cold Ukrainian winter came to the town of Verhovka, which was a ghetto for Jews that were expelled from Bessarabia and Bukovina. From time to time, groups of Jews slipped into the forest about ten kilometers away from the ghetto to collect branches for firewood. From time to time, I too, a boy of about eleven, joined them. The endless expanses of the forest and the huge trees added to the fear from the Germans and the Ukrainians, who might have inflicted punishment on us if we were caught.

When we got to the forest, everyone began collecting twigs and branches, putting them down and tying them so that they could be carried on their backs, with the rest of the bundle dragging on the ground. Unfortunately, I could not keep up with the murderous tempo of completing the bundle, and my bundle was always disheveled, with twigs sticking out and cutting my back. I had to keep up the pace and succeed in having enough time to join the procession back to the ghetto. On the way back, I tried with all my might, not to lag behind, and at least to be last in line.

In one case, a group of German soldiers noticed us. Panic gripped the men, and everyone began to flee for his life, and be swallowed up in the procession, all this while still clinging to the bundle of branches. The Germans set dogs on us, which hurt the edges of the procession in particular. A young man of about twenty, who was among the victims, decided after being injured by the dogs, to take it out on the group, who supposedly had left him to his own devices. The easiest victim was me. The guy jumped on me and beat me, and nobody from the convoy helped me. Wounded and crying bitterly, I reached the ghetto with the bundle of trees, which was a lifeline for my family in the bitter cold that added to the sickness and hunger that were our lot in those days.

As the Germans sensed their end growing near, they made life

a little easier for us. In the town was a market to which the local Gentiles brought their produce and the craftsmen did their work: tailors, butchers, shoemakers, etc. The craftsmen would go to the surrounding villages and perform jobs for Gentiles in return for food. Usually the survivors returned safely, despite the real danger from the anti-Semitic Gentiles and the German army moving on the roads, whether it was retreating or advancing.

My uncle Benjamin, nee Ackerman, left with a tailor - a young man - because my uncle had no profession, and assisted the tailor in his work. They left and did not return. We waited for them before we returned to Bessarabia after the liberation, but there was no sign of life from them. His wife Dina and her two daughters, Rivka and Rachel, had to return to Bessarabia without their father. Upon her return to Yedinitz after the liberation, my aunt Dina died of grief.

Alongside the difficult experiences in Verhovka, we had a very happy experience, and this was the birth of my sister Zisla on March 15, 1942. It was a cold winter day, and as I said we settled in Shmarel's house in a cold entrance room. When my sister Zisla was born under difficult conditions, we requested that Mother move with the baby to an adjacent room that was less cold. The room's occupants were deportees from Bukovina - Mrs. Fanny Abramowitz, the dominant figure among the

room's occupants, as well as Rojce, Tabala and her older sister. Fanny Abramowitz objected to letting my mother and the baby into the room because of differences in mentality, etc. Finally they agreed to let them into the room. They crowded together a bit and cleared a corner near the entrance of the room. We created a single bed made of planks on which my mother and the baby slept, and at whose feet my brother Shimon of blessed memory and I lay. My father found a corner in an adjacent room to lay his head.

The German army, as I previously mentioned, passed through the town from time to time. When the Germans arrived, the townsfolk closed themselves in the houses. At night the Germans would raid the houses looking for women. One night we heard gentle knocking on the door, as beseems "polite guests." When the door was not opened, the knocking grew louder, and Shmarel, the house owner, opened the door for them. The Germans entered like gentlemen, quietly and politely "as befits Germans." Since our bed was near the door, the German came over to my mother, picked up the blanket that covered her face, and saw a beautiful young woman. He lay down beside her. My brother and I felt the German's legs on us. We lay curled up like rags, trembling with fear. My mother began to cry, and there was terrible commotion in the entire room, in which six more women and girls lay. After some time, Shmarel approached the German and asked the German to

leave her alone because she was ill, while "promising" that the next time he would prepare girls for him. Apparently, my mother's illness deterred the German, and he left her alone. The Germans exited the house. The next day we heard that the Germans had entered the house next to us and harassed three beautiful young sisters. The sisters objected and were shot.



Transnistria - Under Romanian Rule

The successes of the Russian army in stopping the winter offensive of 1942 against Moscow, caused irritation in the Romanian government. In a letter dated April 12th, 1942, signed by Constantin Kristescu, director of special intelligence, which was sent to the governor of Bessarabia, he blamed all the Jews in Transnistria, for circulating Communist propaganda, and terrifying the Christian inhabitants of the region. Kristescu claimed that with the onset of the spring offensive, the Soviets would strike an alliance with Turkey, while the Hungarians would declare war on Romania, which would cause the defeat of the German and Romanian armies. The Soviets would reoccupy Transnistria and Bessarabia.

The nervousness that had begun to gnaw at the Romanian government in Transnistria also raised its head in the lower echelons. Gendarmes began to rage against the Ukrainian population as well: beatings, abusing residents, stealing from the local population and the collective farmers, getting drunk and thrashing civilians, shooting for no reason at nighttime. Acts of rape, drunkenness, and theft continued to take place until the end of the government in Transnistria.

In March 1942, when Antonescu was anxious about the

sudden landing of the Soviet army on the shores of Odessa and the surrounding area, they began to issue "nervous" orders in Transnistria, and in particular began to keep an eye on the Jewish camps and observe their movements. It turns out that Antonescu was not only anti-Semitic but also anti-Slavic. He adopted the racist Nazi ideology. On the eve of the outbreak of the war against the Soviet Union, he spoke of the impending conflict among the races. A confrontation against the Slavic race - "a race with a shapeless culture and primitive cultural perceptions." "It was necessary to fight decisively against this race," Ion Antonescu emphasized in a special memorandum he submitted to Hitler on June 11, 1941, the evening of his meeting with him.

The Romanians were portrayed as a barrier to Slavic expansion over the years. At the meeting itself, Ion Antonescu remarked that they must put an end once and for all to the Slavic danger that has threatened Romania and Europe for centuries. "Thanks to the qualities of the Romanian race," added Antonescu, "Romania can continue to fulfill a similar function of an anti-Slavic barrier, for the benefit of Germany." In this meeting, Hitler promised, at his own initiative, territorial compensation in the East, which, as far as Germany saw it, was not limited in terms of area.

The local Jews in the Ukraine where others were housed (us in

Verhovka) had their own eradication history. Between June 1941 and June 1942, about 90,000 Jews were killed by the Germans and the Romanians. Ohlendorf, commander of the German Einsatzgruppe, who committed the murders, was forced to leave his headquarters at the beginning of September 1941, without completing the liquidation of the local Jews. Another possible reason for not completing the task was the Germans evacuating Transnistria, following the signing of the Tighina Agreement between Antonescu and Hitler, and the transfer of responsibility for dealing with the Jews to the Romanians.

The commanders of the Einsatzgruppen were critical of the performance of the Romanian soldiers insofar as the murder of the Jews was concerned, because of their preoccupation with looting and rape, and because of their not burying the corpses. In a report dated August 14, 1941, Ohlendorf wrote that a solution to the problem of the Jews between the Dniester and the Dnieper was placed "in unsuitable hands." To this comment Hitler replied that he was actually satisfied with Antonescu's handling of the problem, and that, "they do it better than we do."

At the trial for war criminals, as I mentioned, Antonescu said that personally, he did not prepare any plan for the annihilation of Jews and placed all responsibility on the General Staff: "I myself did not take any measure of extermination against

another person. In my home not even a chick was slaughtered." I repeat this passage as a comparison with the presentation of Antonescu's policy. At a meeting held on October 11, 1941, which was attended by ministers and district governors, this was Antonescu's statement: "Gentlemen, you know that one of the struggles I undertook is to change this people (Romanian). I will turn the Romanian nation into a homogenous body. I started with Bessarabia. Not even a Jewish footprint will remain in Bessarabia, and Bukovina will also be taken care of."

The ultimate objective was to transfer the Jews that had remained alive after the first wave of murders, both in the Romanian territory and in Transnistria, to improvised camps. As I noted, the local Ukrainian Jews also passed through all levels of hell. The Gentiles of the Ukraine, like the Gentiles of Bessarabia, were brutally cruel to the Ukrainian Jews.

At the beginning of November 1941, the governor of Transnistria, Alexiano, issued an order concerning the status of the Jews, their duties, and the living conditions in the ghettos. The governor presented Antonescu with the draft order. In the preamble to the draft, it was emphasized that the decision to expel the Jews was a Romanian decision, with the objective of liberating the towns and villages in Moldova, Bessarabia, and Bukovina from the presence of the Jews.

The administration renounced all responsibility for the fate

of the Jews, and only extensively emphasized the various prohibitions and the duty of the Jews to be at the complete disposal of the authorities. By doing so, they became slaves of the Romanian state. "A Jew who leaves the ghetto will be considered a spy and executed." This draft order was sent to Antonescu for review and approval in the form of "Order No. 23," which determined the living conditions of the Jews in Transnistria until they were deported or liquidated.

The order remained in force until the liberation of Transnistria by the Soviet Army. The order authorized the gendarmes to "organize" the Jews in the selected locations: in abandoned houses and in private homes. The order forbade the Jews from leaving the area, defined the ghettos as "colonies" and authorized the praetors to choose a Jewish "community leader," who would ensure that the instructions and orders of the Romanian authorities were followed. It was the responsibility of the community leader to report to the authorities, thus turning these leaders into informers. In our ghetto, Verhovka, a man named Schwartz was appointed to be the head of the ghetto. I have already written about Schwartz and his transgressions.

Jews who were not professionals were required to work: in agriculture, in bridge repair, roads, cutting trees in the forests, transporting stones, etc. Jewish professionals and craftsmen were made available to every local or Romanian authority

to perform all necessary work for a minimal daily wage. The administration was authorized to transfer Jews from place to place, from district to district, for performing professional and non-professional work. My father and his brother, who were tinsmiths, were employed in their profession on a farm near the ghetto Verhovka. They performed their duties so faithfully and devotedly that the head of the farm, a Ukrainian, liked them and highly appreciated their professional work. In one case, a hunt for Jews who were about to be sent to Nikolaev for forced labor was carried out, which in effect meant their eradication, as hardly anyone returned from there. The head of the farm hid them in his private home in the attic, even though he endangered himself by doing so. The work managers, agronomists, were brought from Romania to manage the farms.

The number of Jews who were deported to Transnistria from Bessarabia and Bukovina, as well as the mobilization and expulsion of the Ukrainian Jews themselves, gave rise to heavy pressure on the Transnistrian administration. They turned convoys of Jews toward the Bug River, the other side of which was ruled by the Germans. The Germans refused to accept the Jews to their area of control beyond the Bug River, despite the Tighina Agreement between Antonescu and Hitler, which included transfer of the Jews beyond the Bug. The local population also resisted compressing a large number of Jews

into Transnistria and indeed in many places a typhus epidemic broke out due to the terrible sanitary conditions in the camps.

May 6, 1986

Holocaust (from my book, "Poetic Paths")

Now the earth was unformed and void
And darkness upon the face of the light
Sun, moon did not emerge
No shift, no storm – endless night

Rivers flowed to the calm sea
The world turned on its spindle
The silence thundered, no one heard
While the infants wailed and dwindled

A playing child, its mother caresses
While a woman afar, her child drained
Her heart is shattered, for their blood will be shed
In rage and in unthinkable pain

Many are the tragedies since the world's creation
The flood and the bloodshed of wars
But the burning of old man and child
Not even the Satan abhors

Days will pass, perhaps years
Their blood will shine crimson and crushed
The faces of many – old man and child
The world was astoundingly hushed

In our bodies their blood
Forever like a cauldron will churn
In the hearts of dormant generations
Their memory, forever, will burn

שוואה (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

וְהִי־תָהּ הָאָרֶץ, תוהו וְבוהו,
וְחֶשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי יוֹם.
שָׁמַשׁ, יָרַח, לֹא עָצְרוּ, לֹא דָמוּ,
לֹא זָעָה, לֹא גָעָזָה - תְּהוֹם.

זָרְמוּ נַחְלִים, אֶל הַיָּם הַרוֹגֵעַ,
סוֹבֵב עוֹלָם עַל צִירוֹ.
רַעְמָה הַשְׁתִּיקָה, אֵין אִישׁ שׁוֹמֵעַ,
- זַעֲקוֹת עוֹלָל וְשִׁבְרוֹ.

אִם יִלְדָה הַשׁוֹחֵק, בְּרוֹךְ תִּלְטֹף,
בְּעוֹד אִישָׁהּ אִישָׁם,
- יִפְלַח לֵב הָאֵם וַיֵּלֶד עֵינֶיהָ,
- בְּזַעַם יִשְׁפֹךְ דָּמָם.

רְבִים אֶסוֹנוֹת, מִבְּרִיאַת הַחֵלֶד;
מִבּוֹל וְדָם מִלְחָמוֹת,
אֶדְ שִׁרְפֶת נִעְרָה, זָקוּ וַיֵּלֶד,
- לֹא בָרָא שְׁטֵן תְּהוֹמוֹת.

יַעֲבְרוּ הַיָּמִים, אוֹלֵי שָׁנוֹת אֶלֶף,
זוֹהָר דָּמָם יֶאֱדִים,
- פְּגִיחָם שֶׁל רְבִים, זָקוּ וַיֵּלֶד,
בְּעוֹלָם חֲרָשׁ מִדְּהִים.
בְּגוֹפֵינוּ דָּמָם, יִרְתַּח כְּקַלְחַת,
יִסְעִיר דּוֹרוֹת רְדוּמִים.
לְעַד נִזְכּוֹר, כָּל אֶחָד וְכוֹלָם יַחַד,
- עַד אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים.

April 12, 1993

Chosen People (from my book, "Poetic Paths")

You chose us
Of the people, all
You loved us
Your children one and all

You created us for your world
But we became prey
For the evil men
Like animals astray

We were a "light to the people"
Consumed by fire
Large and small
In a whispering pyre

The sky was so quiet
In heaven the silence was great
The empty gaze from the firmament
Did not even open the gate

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| The sea did not churn | Absolute silence, forgotten |
| No ray of light shone | An inattentive ear |
| The heart of man | The strangely thundering silence |
| In blackness alone | That our God did not hear |

12.4.1993

עם נבחר (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

אתה בחרתנו,
מכל העמים.
אהבת אותנו
אהבת בנים.

אתה יצרתנו,
לישם עולם,
- טרף נתתנו,
לחיות אדם.

היה "אור לגוים",
למאכלת אש,
גדולים וקטנים
בכבשן לוחש.

שקטו השמים,
דמם הרקיע,
מבט העיניים,
- לא שער הבקיע.

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| דומיית נשיה, | לא געש זה הים, |
| באזני ערלים, | לא חדרה קרן אור, |
| רעמת השתיקה, | ללבו של אדם, |
| לא שמע אלוהים. | באפל השחור. |

October 6, 1989

Shuddering Fire (from my book, "Poetic Paths")

A thick forest, for thousands of years
Erect, beautiful, and long
No wind or storm can shake them
The trees stand glorious and strong

One night, black and darkened
By evil and damnation
Spread a fire as God watched
To the cries for salvation

Flames without mercy
Gripped the trees in their hate
Cries of anguish and supplication
Did not open heaven's gate

Those standing aloof will not be forgiven
A veil of smoke clouded their vision
They were not sickened
By the unspeakable things that happened

The forest was destroyed
Ghosts among the trunks
Only here and there logs smoldered
The spirit among them not sunk

They shake off their ashes
And look towards the sky
"You chose us from all the trees"
"Can you still hear our cry?"

6.10.1989

אַשׁ בַּצְמֻמָּוֶת (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

יַעַר עֲבוֹת, אֲלִפֵּי שָׁנִים,
זְקוּפִים, יָפִי צִמְרֵת,
לֹא רוּחַ וְסֶעַר לָהֶם יְכוּלִים,
- עֲצֵי הָדָר וְתַפְאֶרֶת.

לֵיל אֶחָד, שָׁחוֹר וְאָפֵל,
בִּידֵי זָדוֹן וְרִשָּׁע,
- אַשׁ נִשְׁתַּלַּחָה אֶל מוֹל אֵל,
לְקוֹל זַעֲקוֹת לִישָׁע.

לְהַבּוֹת אֵשׁ, לֹא רַחֲמִים,
אֶחָזוּ בַּעֲצֵי הַיַּעַר,
קוֹלוֹת דְּאָבָה וְתַחֲנוּגִים,
לֹא פִתְחוּ בַּנְּשָׁמִים שֹׁעַר.

לְעוֹמְדִים מִנֶּגֶד, לֹא יִסְלַח,
עֵנָּן עֲשָׂן, עֲרֵפֶל מִבְּטָם,
מְעִי בְּקִרְבָּם לֹא הִתְהַפֵּד,
מוֹל מְאַכּוֹלֶת הָאֵשׁ וְהַזֶּעַם.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| נִעְרוּ אֶפְרַם, מֵעֵינֵי פֶחֱמִים, | אָפֵל הַיַּעַר, רוּחוֹת רָפָאִים, |
| לְטָשׁוּ אוֹתָן לִישָׁמִים. | בֵּינוֹת זִזְעֵי הַשְּׁלֶכֶת, |
| - "אַתָּה בְּחִרְתָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַצִּים" .. | רַק פֹּה וְשָׁם, אוֹדִים עֲשָׂנִים, |
| - "הַנִּשְׁמָע קוֹלָנוּ עֲדִין?" ... | רוּחַ בְּקִרְבָּם, עוֹד מוֹלֶכֶת. |

November 11, 1991

Oh Lord (from my book, "Poetic Paths")

Oh Lord, my God!

I pray that these things not return

The pain and the rage

The cries and the evil

The crime and bereavement

The sins of man

11.11.1991

אַלִּי (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

אַלִּי אַלִּי!
שְׁלֹא יִחְזֹר לְעוֹלָם;
- הַפֶּאֶב וְהַזַּעַם,
הַבְּכִי וְהַרְשָׁע,
הַשְׂכוֹל וְהַפֶּשַׁע,
- חֲטָאֵי הָאָדָם.

Summary of the Holocaust Chapters:

From the time I was about 10 years old when the war broke out, my memory absorbed what it absorbed. Over the years, since the subject of the Holocaust is close to my heart, I studied and learned as much as I could about everything connected with the Holocaust, which I, my family, my friends, my relatives, my community and my town, Yedinitz, went through. At the trial of Eichmann, for example, I learned that the systematic extermination operations had one objective - the gradual, intensive annihilation of the deportees, also designed by the Germans for the total obliteration of those who remained alive. Fortunately, the Red Army arrived early, and we were immediately released instead of being sent to the crematoria. As you will remember, when the war broke out, the Germans asked Romania to hand over all the Jews and their problem would be solved in the framework of the international solution initiated by Germany.

Antonescu refused their request since he wanted to "enjoy" his actions on his own, and to satisfy the dark and contemptible passions of the Romanian people and army: to unleash the anti-Semitic steam accumulated over generations and to win the affinity of the Romanian people," as a Messiah who redeems and liberates the land of Bessarabia from the Jews."

"Grandpa, tell me a true story about the Holocaust" - Thus my granddaughter Shaked went on and on. And like her, another little girl named Yahav, who came to me with a sharpened pencil and open notebook in her hands, and asked me, "Uncle, write to me about an incident that happened to you in the Holocaust." My answer to her was expressed in this book, at the end of which I wrote to her, "Yahav, your interest in the subject of the Holocaust is essential, and I wish for you, your friends and all the children of Israel, that a Gentile never dare lift a hand against you."

For them and for all the children of Israel who want to know, I reached into the dark recesses of my memory and brought up this true, and dismal story. I felt that I owe it to my friends and family that perished in the Holocaust – young and full of the will to live. May this book be a testimonial to those whose lives were taken - may their memory be blessed.

February 23, 1987

Judgement Day

from my book, "Poetic Paths")

A volcano's crest
Against the backdrop of the heavens
Will roar and thunder
In the city of Jerusalem

Years of darkness and light
For man and Maker
A generation passes
That endured the massacre

What is latent will rise
Its soul will not be lulled
Because in its very core
It will erupt and rumble

A wound, a contusion
But it will not help them
Voices of anguish
Will shake and jolt them

"Man – Where are you?"
Thousands of mouths
From the depths of Treblinka
Will silently shout

And Judgement Day comes
Tearing the net
Of the villain
The evil miscreant

To every violent man
Of hate and loathing
The Judgement Day will come
In Yerushalayim

יום הדין (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| פְּסָגַת הַר גִּעְשׁ, | וּבֹא יוֹם הַדִּין, |
| מוֹל רִקְיָעֵי שָׁמַיִם, | וַיִּקְרַע הַמַּסְכָּת, |
| יְנֵהם, יִרְעֵשׁ, | מִפְּנֵי זֶד מִדֵּהִים, |
| - בָּעִיר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. | דְּמוּת טָרֶף סוֹרֶחַת. |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| שָׁנוֹת חוֹשֶׁף וְאוֹר, | לְכָל גֶּבֶר וְאֵלִים, |
| מוֹל אָדָם וְאֵלֹהִה, | מְגוּעַל יָדַיִם, |
| חוֹלֶף לוֹ הַדּוֹר, | יְבוֹא יוֹם הַדִּין, |
| יָדַע שׁוֹאָה - יָדוּעַ. | - בְּיְרוּשָׁלַיִם. |

רְדוּם יְקוּמוּ,
אֶת נִפְשׁוֹ לֹא יִרְגִיעַ,
כִּי לָבָה לְבוֹ,
בָּעוֹז תִּפְרוֹץ - תִּבְקִיעַ.

פָּצַע, חֲבוּרָה,
אֵף מְזוֹר לָהֶם אֵין.
קוֹלוֹת דְּאָבָה,
תַּצְלִינָה אוֹנִיָּים.

"אָדָם - אֵיכָה?"
- אֶלְפֵי פִיּוֹת חֲתוּמִים,
מְגִיָּא טָרְבֵּלִינָקָה,
יִזְעֲקוּ אֵילִמִּים.



The Liberation by the Russian Army

Life in Transnistria continued in this fashion until March 14, 1944, when the regiments of the Red Army entered the deportation areas and called for the release of every Jew in the camps.

It was about a month and a half before my Bar Mitzvah. Russian soldiers and their tanks were greeted with joy on our part and on theirs. We got on the tanks and we embraced. After everything we went through, we felt relief and elation at meeting with the Russian army. We finally saw soldiers in uniform who did not beat us or riot, but were kind to us, and whose tears of joy were real. It was the eve of Passover, and the liberation was associated with the Exodus from Egypt - from slavery to freedom. The first thing that came to our minds, like the other camp inhabitants, was returning home to Bessarabia, to Yedinitz - our town.

As I said, it was close to my Bar Mitzvah, for which the honorable Rabbi Yeshayahu Elkes of blessed memory had long ago prepared me. Like every boy, I waited for this day to go up to the Torah, to put on Tefillin, and celebrate properly according to the available possibilities. The Russians did not waste time and began to recruit men for the Russian army. My father was

supposed to be recruited, being a young man of about 35. Anxiety gripped us. We told ourselves that we survived the terrible Holocaust together, and now they will take Father away from us. I remember how I turned to my father with tears and said to him, "Father, will you not be with us at my Bar Mitzvah?"

To separate from Father then would have been a second Holocaust for us – my mother with baby Zisla, and my brother Shimon, who was 9½ years old. To return home without Father after having endured the Holocaust, would have been a complete catastrophe for our whole family. So we decided to act - and fast. It was, as I said, the eve of Passover, and just like the Jews had left Egypt in haste, so did we quickly pack our few belongings - along with our relatives - and early in the morning we began to walk and leave the town of Verhovka, on dirt paths, and head beyond the Dniester.

These are the names of the children of Israel who left Transnistria: "Me, my father, my mother, my late brother Shimon, Zisla, my uncle Benjamin (my father's brother), his wife Leah, their son Zenvel, their daughter Tzirel (their daughter Beileh died in Transnistria), my Aunt Dina, and her daughters Rivka and Rachel (their son Moshe died in Transnistria). The tragedy that befell them before the liberation was that Benjamin, Dina's husband, did not return. As I mentioned, a short time before the liberation, he went with a tailor to the villages to do some

work and did not return. We waited for them, but they had disappeared.

Soon convoys began to march toward the Dniester - a march on foot from city to city and from village to village, while being aided by getting rides from the Russian army. Stopping a ride didn't require anything more than a bottle of vodka. Waving your hand with the bottle, the Russian driver would stop, and we only had to pray to arrive safely, after his drinking the vodka. On the way back, along the sides of the road, were mass graves, partial graves, and even the bodily remains of victims of the Holocaust. As I said, most of the way we did on foot, wandering from one ruined town to another. A terrible thing happened on our way back. My father and I were usually ahead of the procession of returnees. We would come to a place and find shelter. My father would leave me with the belongings and go to my mother, who was walking with my brother Shimon and the baby. Progress was usually together with the procession of returnees who all were headed in the same direction - the Dniester. This practice usually worked, and in the evening we were always together - the whole family - where we had settled. One day we arrived in Yampol. As always, my father left me and went to my mother, but this time he did not meet her. He came back to me alone and said that he had gone a long way, and asked people in the convoy, but did not find her. A terrible anxiety seized us. I did not stop crying and my father

ran among the crowds of people arriving in the procession and inquired, but there was no news. We went through many horrors in the Holocaust, but this time we were gripped by the disaster, which, God forbid, may have come to pass. Father came back to me and we both sat and cried all night long.

The next day, Father went over the route again. I stayed where I was waiting anxiously and hopefully. I sat and tarried while he walked like a sleepwalker, asking anyone he could. Towards evening, on the second day, while he was broken and in despair, and feeling guilty, he asked himself - why had we left her alone and not walked together?

Evening began to approach, and someone from the convoy told Father that he saw a woman with two children a certain distance away. A spark of hope was ignited. My father ran with all his strength to the place where my mother was seen, according to the description he had received. At the end of the evening convoy of that day, when everyone was about to settle down for a night's sleep, he saw a woman in the distance making her way with the last of her strength, basically alone, detached from the rest of the convoy. It was my mother with the children - Shimon next to her and Zisla in her arms. If there are miracles in the world, this was one of them. It was not far from where we had settled down, where I was left alone, worried and crying. My father got a ride and brought them to where

we had placed ourselves. It was one of the greatest moments in my life to see Mother with Shimon and Zisla with us. This was after all the terrible thoughts that ran through my mind, ever since we lost her. We fell into each other's arms, all hugging and crying. Only Zisla did not understand why we were crying.

Here is mother's story of the chain of events that caused the frightful episode: Mother walked along as usual with the procession, because for the most part they all went in the same direction - towards the Dniester. Mother somehow had made a mistake and turned another way, in which there were also people, but not the way Father and I went. It was getting dark and suddenly she found herself alone at a crossroads. Not far away, she saw some houses of Ukrainian farmers. She decided to go to one of the houses and ask to spend the night with the children, and the next day continue on the way to Yampol, to which we were all supposed to arrive (a city on the edge of the Dniester). Mother knocked on the door of one of the houses in fear, knowing the attitude of the Gentiles to us and their cruelty. Having no choice, she spoke to the Gentile woman who opened the door for her, told her that she had lost her way to Yampol, and requested to stay overnight with her children. Fortunately, and amazingly, Mother encountered a sympathetic attitude from the Gentile woman. The woman let them into her house, gave them food and treated them very well. The next morning, she supplied them with food and

water. My mother thanked her wholeheartedly and set off. She held the baby in her arms and Shimon held her hand.

Suddenly a sheigetza (a young Ukrainian) passed by on horseback, seeing my mother with the children. My mother stopped him and asked him to show her the way to Yampol. He showed her how to go, and she thanked him and continued walking on a deserted road. There was no Jewish convoy, and she reached a crossroads. My mother, deciding which way to go, finally decided to turn right. My brother Shimon stopped and began to cry, demanded that Mama turn left - and was adamant about it. My mother, even though the way to the left did not look correct to her, accepted his request and turned left. They went a long way and suddenly from a distance she saw many people walking the same way. It turned out that this was the correct way and they joined the procession on the way to Yampol.

On the way to the Yampol convoy, Father ran around in panic and questioned whoever he could. Suddenly he saw a woman in the distance with children, barely managing – it was Mother, with the children. The meeting was very moving, especially when they arrived at the place in which I anxiously waited and hoped it would end well. There was relief and great joy, wet with tears.

From then on, we stayed together, close to each other on the

way home. After a lot of wandering on the roads, both on foot and by hitchhiking, we reached the outskirts of the town of Yedinitz. It was the first time I had seen my town from a distance, since when we were expelled from the town I did not dare look back to the abandoned hamlet. With great tension we entered Yedinitz. The town was ravaged, houses were broken into, and there was destruction at every turn. Individual refugees, and parts of broken families returned to the looted town. Here and there we met Jews who were returning, broken and shattered from the hardships of the deportation, who had lost loved ones on the deportation routes and in the camps. As we entered the town, we immediately turned to the street where our house stood. I ran forward straight to the ransacked house, and the first thing I looked for were the valuables we had hidden in the ground, and which we had hoped to find during all the days of the expulsion. To our disappointment we found an empty pit, and a pillaged house without windows and doors, completely looted.

Like the other returnees, we started looking for another abandoned house, in a reasonable condition, to inhabit. We found the house of the Shapira family and settled there. There were two rooms and a kitchen, a small courtyard and a basement. In the Shapira house, where we settled, my father did repairs on his own, skilled in everything. (By the way, Chava Shapira is still a member of Kibbutz Yagur. I remember, when

she left the town before the war, and immigrated to Israel as part of the Gordonia movement.) The Gentiles looked upon us with mixed feelings, with hatred and with fear that revenge might occur for everything they did to us – thinking then that the final solution to the Jews had been accomplished, as the Romanians then told them.

The remnants of the Jews settled in the town, and formed an organized community, more or less: religious services, and a synagogue, all while feeling free to get back to ourselves as much as we could. My father, my uncle Benjamin and another tinsmith named Zelik, began working for the local municipality (Ray Com House), which meant communist regional economy. They needed professional craftsmen. My father and his brother Benjamin, by profession, proved themselves - as always - knowing even how to buy the hearts of their superiors. After a while, my father and uncle went to work for the Border Police, while Zelik remained to work at Ray Com House.

I want to dwell a bit on Zelik. Zelik was married to a very handsome woman who had two children - a very successful boy and girl. All this, I remember, was before the war. Zelik had always been a womanizer. While my father did everything he could to sacrifice himself with all his might for the sake of our family - and evaded every trap (there were many attempts to take Father to work in distant places, and separate him from the family), Zelik was "happy" for the opportunity to be taken

from his family, and philander far away. And indeed, it did not require much effort, as "with the help of the Romanians" he was separated from his family, and survived the Holocaust while his illustrious family - without a head of household – was annihilated in the Holocaust. Zelik returned alone to Yedinitz after the Holocaust, married a young Holocaust survivor, and had a child. Zelik fed the child - who disturbed Zelik in his exploits - sunflower seeds, hoping that "would free him" and he would again be able to philander. The surviving child was sold by Zelik.

My father and my uncle began to work, as stated, in the service of the Border Police Corps (Pugarnitsniki). It should be known that the Soviet regime was no stranger to us, secretive and mysterious. After all, in 1940 we lived under it and we became familiar with the nature of the government. We learned that we had to be disciplined, not to upset the regime, be loyal citizens, and to prove this loyalty on all kinds of occasions.

Soon my father and uncle made friendly connections with army officers, and especially with their commander in the town by the name of Captain Hesenshin. Hesenshin was a very nice person. He had a wife and child and deep ties of friendship were established between our families and his family. We sometimes made sure to have house parties – *vecherinki* in Russian - with lots of food and loads of vodka. Our economic situation was quite reasonable.

I went to school, to fourth grade, on Postal Street (the Potshtova). Since I was religious, from the time of Verhovka, after my Bar Mitzvah, I had a problem of keeping mitzvot, especially writing on the Sabbath at school. The Russians, by their very nature, did not approve of religious customs, to put it mildly, and they made it difficult for anyone who observed them. Keeping mitzvot had to be hidden and in secret. For example, on Passover it was offensive to be seen eating matzah or any other religious customs. I had a problem with this. I would get up very early in the morning, run to the synagogue – which was not close to our house – pray, and return home quickly, in order to arrive at school on time. Nobody could know or discern that I was observant. This was objectionable not only among the school teachers and students, but also among the Jewish students. A particularly difficult problem was studying on the Sabbath. I do not know how, but with a supreme effort I managed not to write on Saturdays at school. Religion was abhorrent in every way.

We spent half of 1944-1945 in Yedinitz. I finished fourth grade and ascended to fifth grade. It was possible to remain in Yedinitz after we had come to terms with the Soviet regime, but...



Leaving Yedinitz

Since the Russians allowed the Jews - "citizens of Romania" before the war - to return to the Romanian region, a movement of Jews began to move toward the city Czernowitz, where "papers were arranged" to move to Romania. As I said, despite the fact that the economic situation in Yedinitz was reasonable, my father decided, with his natural courage and ambition, to leave Yedinitz and move to Czernowitz on the way to Romania. Leaving Yedinitz wasn't simple, in terms of the Soviet laws. To move to another city, a special permit was required, a "Komandirovka," which stated that a person was legally released from his place of work. Also, confirmation from the school where I studied was required. Our good relationship with Captain Hesenshin of the border guard military unit helped us a great deal. Captain Hesenshin gave my father the important license he hoped for, without which you could not move to another city.

We packed up our things, and one morning very early we set out to the end of the postal street (The Potshtowa), in order to catch a ride to Czernowitz. Despite the license we had, we were very careful and prepared for the journey with utmost secrecy – even from other Jews. Only the closest to us knew about our move. Despite the secrecy, and the license we had,

standing early in the morning at the exit from the town, we were noticed by the NKVD, and they arrested my father. Fear and anxiety descended upon us, based on our familiarity with the conduct of the Soviet government. In our experience they were capable of exiling my father, even to Siberia, without a trial and without notifying anyone - not even the family.

Doleful thoughts flooded our minds. Luckily for us, the license my father was equipped with from Captain Hesenshin worked, and my father was released after a few hours of distress. If before the arrest I still went to relatives and friends to part from them, after my father's release we left in haste, and tried to get out of the town as quickly as possible.

Before the arrest I managed to visit my uncle Benjamin, his wife Leah, their son Zenvel, and their daughter Tzirel - and say goodbye to them. Olya the matchmaker, our old friend, who came back from the camps alone, lost her entire family, and Olya suddenly appeared, to say goodbye to us.

We reached Czernowitz and settled in a meager apartment with the Kligman family. I was very happy to meet with my childhood friend, Davidka Kligman. With Davidka I would go out to the big and unfamiliar city. Davidka, who was very mischievous, took me to all kinds of places he knew, because he had more "seniority" than me in the big city. According to

his suggestion, instead of getting on a tram, we hung on the outside, as was customary. Unfortunately, another tram came towards us, and since the space between the tracks of the two trams was small, and since on the approaching tram people were hanging and clinging to the outside handles as well, when the two tram cars met, they rubbed against each other and I fell and was wounded. Davidka took me to the hospital, where I stayed for about a month.

As I previously mentioned, my aunt Dina returned to Yedinitz with her two daughters, Rivka and Rachel. Their son Moshe died in Transnistria, and her husband, Binyamin, as mentioned, went to the village shortly before the liberation, and did not return. Dina died of grief and left both girls orphaned. We decided after her death that little Rachel would join our family, and the older daughter, Rivka, would join the family of my uncle Binyamin (my father's brother).

When we left Yedinitz, we of course took Rachel with us. When we arrived in Czernowitz, she missed her older sister, Rivka, who remained in Yedinitz. "Who knows if this farewell will be for good?"

While my father was arranging the paperwork for the passage to Romania, we called for Rivka to come urgently to Czernowitz. The joy was great, because it would have been a huge omission

had we not taken this step. Since we were afraid that a family with five children would raise questions and demands at the border crossing to Romania, my father found a family named Kollesky, special and lovely people who agreed to attach the girls to their paperwork "as their daughters," at great risk, and pass the Romanian border with them. We reached the border with all the "appropriate" papers. After careful inspection and investigations, we passed over the border, and so did the Kollesky family. When we arrived in Romania, the two girls, Rebecca and Rachel, returned to us and we expressed heartfelt thanks to these good people - the Kollesky family.



Parting from My Parents

I cannot remember the name of the first border town we reached as we crossed into Romania, but we settled with many other Jewish refugees who arrived from Czernowitz to post-war Romania. There were Zionist movements like Gordonia, Agudat Israel, Dror Habonim, Hashomer Hatzair and others. A short time after we arrived, a young man approached us and suggested to my father that he send me to an orphanage from which I would be able to immigrate to Israel more quickly. This is because in the years 1945-1946 the British greatly limited the immigration of Jews to Israel, and it was conducted in an illegal manner. The odds that we could all immigrate to Israel soon were quite remote. From time to time the Zionist movement organized groups of Jews, which included members of all the Zionist movements in Romania.

The chances of being incorporated in one of the groups for Aliyah were quite slim. The person who spoke to us was a representative of the Gordonia movement. Even though his proposal had deterred my parents, I was enchanted by it. My parents saw that I was inclined to actually take the step, and they agreed to his proposal. My parents packed me a few things, equipped me with a little bit of money, and the day arrived when I had to say farewell to my father, mother, Shimon

and Zisla. As the hour of parting approached, I got butterflies in my stomach and almost changed my mind, but the man from Gordonia, who was a charismatic person, persuaded me, and the chance to immigrate to the Land of Israel the very next day captivated me.

I remember that a truck arrived on which there were many more children. I parted from my loved ones and went to the open truck and it began to move. I looked back a little longer to see my parents and siblings becoming further and further away. As they disappeared from my sight, the longing began to gnaw at me in a way I had never felt before, and I certainly had not considered the difficult emotion I felt. My parents were gone, and I found myself among children, some accompanied by their parents, and me - alone.

Lonesome, forlorn, and missing them, the tears broke through every dam and began to flow like a spring. I regretted the process, but it was already too late. I continued driving with the group of children. The group leader noticed me and my distress and tried to console me and promise me that I would soon go to Israel and my parents would also come to Israel after me. The pastoral picture he painted appealed to me and calmed me a little. Among the passengers was a woman who was traveling with her daughter and her name was Yona - an only child. The woman noticed my personal distress and began

to take me "under her wing." Her comfort and encouragement helped me a little in holding on. We reached the town of Bacau, to the orphanage. I was fifteen years old then. In spite of the conditions and how we were taken care of by the counselors, especially Israel the counselor, the longing gnawed at me incessantly and my tears did not stop.

I found myself among so many children, all of them waiting to immigrate to Israel. We were aware that immigration was limited and that only a small number could immigrate to Israel from time to time. In my anguish, I would occasionally turn to the Israel the counselor, and ask when I could make Aliyah already. I must emphasize that his attitude toward me was warm, kind, friendly, and considerate. He saw that I could not find my place among the children in the orphanage. In Romania there were training groups of pioneers, who lived in communes like in a kibbutz, but even more socially strict. The Gordonia movement, to which I belonged, had a training group in Bacau, which was located in a sustainable farm that was most likely purchased by the Gordonia Movement.

In the commune there were young men and women aged 20-30 from all over Romania. They worked in agriculture, in the cowshed, and more, under the guidance of a professional Jewish agronomist who by his admission was not a Zionist. Emphasis was placed on preparation for Zionist pioneering

ideology, prior to immigration to Israel. Equality among the members was greatly stressed. There was a case of one of the girls receiving a cake. The girl did not share the cake with everyone else and thus she was unequivocally expelled from the commune.

A man named Kurt was in charge of Gordonia's training communes in Romania. Israel, the counselor from the orphanage, who, as I said, noticed my distress there, decided to transfer only me to the commune in Bacau, despite my young age. I was told that from there I would be able to immigrate to Israel more quickly, as I aspired. One day a young man from the Gordonia administration arrived, a very nice and cordial fellow. He took me to the commune in Bacau. On the way to the commune he gave me an explanation about the customs in the commune, in addition to pure Zionism. He told me that the greeting and the slogan of the members of Gordonia, was "Be strong and make it happen."

I arrived at the commune, and it was a beautiful place, bathed in fruit trees and well-kept gardens. The commune members received me warmly, nurtured me, and spoiled me in every way. While the commune members ate fairly simple food, for me they would prepare omelets and special dishes, which were not usually given to members of the commune. The members tried to make my time pleasant. Apparently, Israel

the counselor informed them about me – a boy who went through the Holocaust, etc. They made sure that I did not have “to think” too much. They would take me to movies and to entertainment evenings in the commune. It was a way of life of passion for Zionism and ambition to immigrate to Israel and fulfill what A.D. Gordon said (after whom the Gordonia movement is named). "Make it Happen!" was one of the songs the pioneers sang.

My job at the commune was to help a wagon driver named Hershko. He had a wagon with two horses, with whom he would go to the city and bring supplies. I liked this Hershko very much. During all our trips, he would "lecture me" about Zionism and I got the message. I remember a special occurrence with Hershko: We went out to town and I had a little bit of money, which my parents had given me at the time.

Wishing to express my gratitude and appreciation to him for the way he treated me, I suggested to him that we go down to town and I would treat him to a cold drink and cake. He refused vehemently, not because he wanted to save me money, but for fear of the matter being discovered by the commune. They could have seen it as him taking advantage of me, which went against the way of life, customs, and laws of the commune to maintain utmost solidarity and equality - all a bit exaggerated in my opinion.

After a while they found me a new job as a cowherd. I would go out every day with one cow and two calves, one that belonged to the cow and the other of a different cow. Beyond the commune, not far from it, was a large meadow with a river crossing it. Every morning I would go out with the cows to the site, where the flocks of the Gentiles also grazed. I would lie on the grass while the cows grazed in the meadow, and I engaged in "Jewish thought." I thought about my parents, my brother, and my sister, and I longed for them. One day while I was busy daydreaming, the calf that didn't belong to the cow - the extra one - disappeared. I was very upset, went back to the commune with the cow and other calf, and was afraid of the agronomist's reaction. He was a kind man, but grave. Luckily, everyone was considerate of me. The next day, at my own initiative, I set out for the nearby countryside to the peasants' houses, and in my broken Romanian I asked if they had found my lost calf in the meadow.

After we parted, my parents joined the "Agudat Yisrael" commune in Bucharest, waiting for their turn to immigrate to Israel. One day my father unexpectedly came to see me at the commune in Bacau. When I saw him, I fell into his arms and I could not stop crying. At this meeting, I decided to return to my parents, but members of the commune, and especially the agronomist (whose name I do not remember), tried to convince us, saying that very soon I would be able to immigrate

to Israel - something that enchanted me a great deal and made me overcome my dire longing. With pain and sorrow, I parted from Father, who came to me with another relative named Mordechai Wallach - a nice and educated man from our town, Yedinitz. After a short while, it was time to assemble a small list of candidates for Aliyah to Israel. Among the members of the commune, each fought for his place on the list of immigrants. They put me on the list. The rapture of immigrating to Israel, lessened my longing a bit and improved my mood.



Immigrating to Israel

One day at the beginning of July 1946, a few wagons arrived at the commune. I mounted the wagon of my friend Hershko the wagon driver and we drove - after a very emotional farewell from the remaining members of the commune - to the railway station in Bacau. Hershko, who was not on the list of immigrants, said goodbye to me in tears. From Bacau we continued to Bucharest, where an exciting surprise awaited me. My father was waiting for me there. And once again I longed for my family who was still in Romania, and who knew when I would see them.

In Bucharest I met children from the orphanage, among them the girl Yona with her mother - the one who "adopted me," as you will recall, the first time that I separated from my parents. From Bucharest we took the train to Yugoslavia. This wave of immigration was headed by the late David Tenenbaum, a sharp-witted man with marvelous leadership skills. We arrived in Zagreb, Croatia, and from there continued to a small port called Bacar. David Tenenbaum knew how to instill in us an uplifting, Zionist spirit. On our way by train to Yugoslavia, he composed a Yiddish song that expressed the great expectation that we all felt - immigration to Israel.

And the song that he composed:

Aunzer lid.

Aunzer lid iz fil mit troyer,
Treyst iz aunzer auntergang.
Khutsh der soyne shteyt beym toyer,
Shturemt iugnt mit gezang.

Chorus:

lung iz yeder, yeder, yeder ver as vil nar,
Yarn abn keyn bedeyt.
Alte kenen, kenen, kenen zeyn nakh kinder,
Fin der neyer freyer tseyt.

Mir gedenken ale sunem,
Mir dermanen ale feynt.
Eybik vlen mir farbindn,
Aunzer nekhtn mit dm eynt.

Chorus.

Loose translation of the song:
Our song is full of sadness
Our being is melancholy
Although the cynic stands at the gate
The youth flow in song.

והרי השיר שחיבר;

אונזער ליד.

אונזער ליד איז פיל מיט טרויער,
טרייסט איז אונזער אונטערגאנג.
חוטש דער סוינע שטייט ביים טויער,
שטורעמט יוגנט מיט געזאנג.

פזמון;

יונג איז יעדער, יעדער, יעדער ווער אס וויל נאר,
יארן אבן קיין בעדייט.
אלטע קענען, קענען, קענען זיין נאך קינדער,
פין דער נייער פרייער צייט.

מיר געדענקען אלע סונעם,
מיר דערמאנען אלע פיינט.
אייביק וולען מיר פארבינדן,
אונזער נעכטן מיט דם איינט.

פזמון;...

תרגום חופשי של השיר;
שירינו מלא עצב,
הווייטנו תוגה,
למרות שהשונא עומד בשער,
זורם הנוער בשירה.

A young man is anyone - anyone who yearns
Years have no meaning
Old people can be children
In a new era of freedom.

We remember all the haters
We remember all the enemies
We will forever
Bind yesterday with today

צעיר הוא כל אחד - מי שרוצה,
לשנים אין משמעות,
זקנים יכולים להיות ילדים,
בתקופה חדשה ובחרות.

אנו זוכרים את כל השונאים,
אנו מזכירים את כל האויבים,
אנו נקשר לעולם,
את האתמול עם ההיום.

We embarked on the illegal immigrant ship "Haganah" in early July 1946. Upon boarding the ship, each person received a bottle of water. It was late afternoon, and people filled every corner of the ship. There were those who preferred to go down to the hold or went down because they had no choice. I settled on the deck. Soon there was a severe shortage of water. In the small packages that were distributed to us, there was cocoa, sugar and a few other things. I was very upset, because of the thirst, and my friends and I tried to sweeten seawater with the sugar we had in our packages. Naturally we did not succeed.

I remember, one day I was very thirsty, and I knew there was a place on the ship's bridge where the sick were concentrated and there was water. I got up like a drunkard from weakness and thirst, and I began to walk and push among crowds of people like me, who were looking for water. I could not get there and get some water. The feeling of great thirst reminded me of the Transnistrian deportations without water.

For about ten days we sailed on the old ship, and as we approached the shores of Israel, we were closed in by some British warships. The captain of our ship decided to be swallowed up by the masses of immigrants and was replaced by one of the regular immigrants. A British warship approached our ship and British soldiers tried and even managed to board the ship. There was a conflict between the immigrants and the British soldiers.

When we reached the territorial waters of Israel, there was a problem - large quantities of water entered the ship's belly, where women and children lay in the dark on narrow wooden bunks. When the danger increased, they brought the people from the belly of the ship to the deck. This situation created instability for the ship, and the ship swerved to the right. People were ordered to move to the left side of the deck and back again. When the danger increased, they put all of us on two British warships.

On these ships we entered Haifa port, which we saw from Mount Carmel, sending its lights towards us. These lights continued to be seen for the next two weeks, until they decided to transfer us to the Atlit detention camp. Tired, exhausted, hungry, and thirsty, we got off the ships to the buses that drove us to Atlit. The first step on the Land of Israel was exciting and reverent. At last we were treading on the ground of the country we had dreamed about.

Dreamland (From my book, "Poetic Paths" – 6/7/1987)

I first met you
On a summer's day bright
And felt my heart moved
By your dress of white

Your burning body
Sand dunes spread
And lope to the sea
Sparking thoughts in my head

Wild-haired beauty
Orchards of gold
I will approach thy gate
This land in love I will hold

The Carmel and the coast
Caves and rocky ground
Unending skies
Their welcome abounds

Ancient elation and song
From every valley and mountain
With the beat of hammers
Every mouth wide will open

And today – oh, today
As the years pass by
And the heat is glorious
As paths wither and die

With my face to the sea
I will stand like the sun's beams
And ask silently
If it was all a dream

And the sea answers me
Furious and raging
And sends a rush of heat
Whispering, caressing

Like a disappearing wave
From sea to land
Consuming and encompassing
The burning sand

Yes, they will return in joy
The day is not far, it would seem
On every road and path
No longer just a dream

ארץ חלום - שיר מספרי "נתיבי שירה" מ-1987.6.7

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| פגשתיך ראשונה, | והיום - הו היום, |
| ביום קיץ בהיר, | בחלופי השנים, |
| שמלתך הלבנה, | ויקר גם החום, |
| את לבי מה הסעיר. | וקמלו השבילים. |

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| כי גופך הלוחט, | עם פנים, אל מול ים, |
| דיגונות חול פרוסות, | אצמוד, כחום יום, |
| אל מול גל ים שועט, | ואשאל, אתמם, |
| - מה הלהיב דמיונות. | - אם היה זה חלום. |

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| חן פרוצת שער, | ועונה לי הים, |
| פרדסי הזהב, | הזועף, הגועש, |
| כי אבוא בשער, | ושולח גל חם, |
| הארץ כה אוהב. | מלטה ולוחש. |

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| הפרמל והחוף, | כמו גל מתרחק, |
| מערות וטרשים, | מחוף ים וחוזר, |
| ישמים אין סוף, | מלחך וחובק, |
| את פני מקבלים. | את החול הבוער. |

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| רון, שירת - קדומים, | כן, ישובו בגיל, |
| מפל עמק ונהר, | - לא ירחק הוא היום. |
| עם הלמות פטישים, | בכל דרך ושביל, |
| אז כל פה - מה יפער. | לא - אין זה חלום. |



Atlit Camp, Hadera Agricultural Settlement

The Atlit detention camp was well-fenced, with British army guard towers scattered around it. Even the camp side that faced the sea was fenced with watchtowers. To this day, 60 years later, when I pass the area I look for and find the remains of the watchtowers standing on the hills around the camp. The Atlit camp is now a museum of the immigration of those days. When we reached Atlit, the Jewish Agency workers received us admirably and housed us in the barracks. I remember the first time we entered the dining room building to eat. It was a very impressive sight to see tables set with all kinds of goodies, especially the oranges that caught our eyes.

As I mentioned above, the immigrants were divided according to the Zionist movement with which they immigrated to Israel. In each barrack there was a group of immigrants. We were the "Gordonia," but there were also movements like "Dror Habonim," "Bnei Akiva," "Hashomer Hatzair" and so on. Every movement kept its character, its slogan, and its flag, but all of them, without exception, were Zionists and overjoyed about realizing the dream of immigrating to Israel. This was expressed in homeland songs, conversations, Hebrew learning, and preparation for the entrance to the real home – Eretz Yisrael. Our David Tenenbaum quickly organized the "Gordonia"

group. Every morning we held a formation while waving the flag and singing Hatikvah. David organized Hebrew study groups, and everyone learned the language passionately. The control and organization within the camp was in the hands of the Jewish Agency. We saw the British from a distance around the camp, and they "watched" us closely with the help of the giant projectors, with which they illuminated us at night.

You could say that the atmosphere of the Land of Israel was already in place. Cultural activities, dance evenings, even a drama club, all began to ensue. In Atlit we heard lectures about kibbutzim, settlements, kibbutz life, and more. We were very curious to see with our own eyes what was happening beyond the fence of the camp. I remember a time we rode on buses from Haifa port to Atlit, and through the bus window I saw a sprinkler turning and splashing water. "Wonder of wonders."

We were in Atlit about two and a half months, and the day of liberation from the camp was approaching. I packed up the few belongings I had. One day a man named Pinchas Karni came to the camp. He would be our guide for the next two years.

On the day of liberation, we gathered near the camp gate, where the clinic was located.

The double wooden gate was opened. The first thing we did when we passed through the gate was break into great song,

while dancing the traditional hora. It was the first time I danced the hora. The British sentries stood looking at us with cold eyes. Pinchas the counselor took us by bus straight to Hadera - to the "agricultural settlement." It was a farm for youth that contained all branches of the farm - a chicken coop, a cowshed, a garden nursery, a vegetable patch, etc. The place was well maintained. Green grass and flowers were everywhere. When we arrived at the farm on Sukkot eve, the first thing we did was build a sukkah from the packs of straw on the green grass.

We were assigned a housemother named Chaya Schechter. Chaya was a very special and dedicated woman – just like a mother – and we so much needed “a mother.” Pinchas Karni, was a very educated, charismatic, and very suitable person for his job from all points of view.

In the farm we settled into well-kept accommodations, three or four in a room. My entire package of belongings was taken from me and placed in some attic. We got new clothes from head to toe. Each person was given a personal number - mine was no. 42. We entered a completely different world, a world we never knew. Warmth, love, concern, and especially education were above and beyond. This was the policy of the "Youth Aliyah" department of the Jewish Agency. Their representative, Ruth Birk, visited us from time to time and followed the process of our absorption, as well as telling us the news of the Aliyah that

was on its way, a subject that really interested me, since my parents and my siblings aspired to come to Israel.

When we arrived at the agricultural settlement, we found a group of youth from Greece as well as another group of youth. We were surprised at how they already spoke fluent Hebrew. I could not believe that I would ever easily speak Hebrew like they did. Education was from A to Z - from "how to eat soup" to daily behavior.

The daily schedule was half a day's work and half a day of study. The work was of all types, including cleaning work, which helped us. The subjects of study were Bible, Hebrew and general history, Hebrew and general literature, nature and



Chaya
the Housemother



The "Ma'apilim" (Illegal Immigrants) Group at the
Hadera Agricultural Settlement

nature related subjects, arithmetic, geography and knowledge of the land, Zionism and Jewish sociology, theoretical and practical agriculture and affiliated subjects.

I would like to mention with special respect the teachers, the instructors in the branches of agriculture, etc. And it is they who I still remember, and if I forget or not remember any of them – they will forgive me.

Pinchas Karni of blessed memory, the counselor of our group the "Ma'apilim," was also a school principal. Pinchas and his wife Leah, also of blessed memory, had a daughter named Michal who was born on the farm. Pinchas was in fact a member of the "Neve Ilan" group near Jerusalem, and he was "loaned" to us to engage in youth counseling. Pinchas also engaged in teaching like: Bible and giving lectures on a variety of subjects, which especially fascinated us.

Moshe Liss of blessed memory, the agronomist, was a noble man of great stature, a Jew of Polish origin who lived on the farm with his family. Chaya Schechter, the housemother, lived on the farm - an Israeli woman and mother, in every sense of the word.

The late Joseph Feuchtwanger, the nature teacher, was a traditional man who lived in Kfar HaRoeh. He was a wise and captivating man with his knowledge and sense of humor. Every lesson with him began with an intelligent joke, that always had a moral.

Itka, the supervisor and instructor in the vegetable garden, was a woman full of body and soul.

Yaakov the janitor was a professional with knowledge of everything on the farm. Friends enjoyed working with him and being under his guidance very much.

Yosef, the music and general literature teacher was a "Yekke" with his integrity and his naive innocence.

Yonina taught grammar. Grammar is not my favorite subject, but little Yonina knew how to give the lesson, and you could not help but like her and her patient and matter-of-fact approach.

Levi, the cultivation of field crops instructor, taught hard work in the field, combined with the perpetual friendly smile on his face.

Sharka from the garden nursery was a small woman with a wide brimmed straw hat who treated her friends who worked in the nursery like her flowers. The nursery and the flower beds around it often served as a place of solitude for couples in love. (We received daily reports on who was with who the previous night from Shechter, the detective of our group).

Pnina, a Mishmar Hasharon farm member, was asked to guide us in the chicken coop. I personally worked with her for a long time. Maybe you will say that I automatically praise everyone, but Pnina really was a special woman, full of love and concern for friends who worked in the coop. I remember she would

bring blackberry juice from her kibbutz - a rare drink.

Nahum, the geography, homeland, and math teacher was a person with deep knowledge. He got to the root of each subject and passed it on to his mesmerized students.

Tamar, the bookkeeper, always explained things kindly to us. And last but not least - Shmuel Golansky of blessed memory (who fell in the War of Independence). Shmuel was our Gadna (youth battalions) counselor and attending Gadna with him was an experience. Shmuel was a man of demonstrative daring and his stories about the Haganah members' heroic deeds fascinated us a great deal. Among his stories was his "prophecy" that if the establishment of a Jewish state was declared in the Land of Israel, all the Arab countries would attack us. Please remember this "prophecy." We would go out to the eucalyptus grove of Hadera with Shmuel Golansky, and there we trained in face-to-face combat, with sticks and with "dry" bullets in outdated guns. If military police came to the area, we would quickly hide the "heavy weapons" – the sticks and guns – and sit in a circle like a group of cheerful picnickers.

One of the great and historic experiences that was deeply rooted in our hearts was the Friday afternoon of May 14th, 1948. I remember standing on the balcony of my room and polishing my shoes for Shabbat. Our residential building

was adjacent to a hut that served as a classroom. There was a clumsy old radio in the hut. Suddenly, David Ben Gurion's voice was heard: "We hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel – the State of Israel." This declaration immediately intersected with the prophecy of Shmuel Golansky in the eucalyptus grove. There was great joy mixed with worry, anxiety, and prayers for the future.

Prayer (a poem from my book "Poetic Paths")

Please!

Hear oh God, Israel is your people,

Israel is one.

Blessed be its glorious kingdom

forever and ever.

And you shall love

your people Israel

with all your heart and with all your might.

May these things

that we ask of you today

be a light at your feet

as you sit

on your throne

And may they be written in your book of memories

forever

and ever

Amen!

תפלה (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

אָנָא!

- שְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים, יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ

- יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחַת.

יְבוֹרֶךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ

- לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְאַהֲבַת אֶת

יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ

- בְּכָל לִבְךָ וּבְכָל מְאוּדֶךָ.

לֹו יְהִי, דְּבָרִים אֱלֹהִי,

אֲשֶׁר אָנוּ מְבַקְשִׁים, הַיּוֹם מִמָּךְ

- גֵּר לְרִגְלֶיךָ,

בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ,

עַל כִּסֵּא כְבוֹדֶךָ.

וּכְתִבָּתָם בְּסֶפֶר זִכְרוֹנוֹתֶיךָ

- לְעַד

וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמֶיךָ

אָמֵן!

Forgive me for those I did not mention, since 60 years have gone by. In conclusion, the special treatment we received from everyone was due to two reasons. The first is the nature of the good people who helped the absorption of surviving youth. Second, the atmosphere that prevailed at that time in the entire community was one of "together towards a noble goal."

Personally, I had quite a few social problems. The youth group with whom I came to the agricultural settlement numbered 45 children. It consisted almost entirely of immigrants from Romania itself. Their native language was Romanian, and mine - Yiddish and Russian. Inside the group were organized bands of former residents of Romania, from the cities of Roman, Botosani, Iasi, etc. - the kind of gangs that characterize that age. Since I did not belong to a certain gang, and because of my ludicrous Romanian, they turned me into the "ugly duckling." I had a hard time of verbal harassment, which was typical of our age group. More than once, I spilled my heart out to Pinchas the counselor. He understood my plight, but I do not have an explanation for why he did not assist me with this – the help I had so needed.

As I mentioned, the Romanian language was not well known to me, and I was glad that this forced me to learn the Hebrew language fast and well, until I became the important writer of the group. I remember that we went on a big annual trip, and at

my own initiative, I wrote articles about the places we passed, and the experiences of the trip. I won the praise of Pinhas the counselor, who explicitly noted in the summary leaflet of the annual trip – "Editor-in-Chief - Moshe Glotman."

We were in the agricultural settlement for two years, which made us citizens, pioneers, and having a high sense of values. I think that to this day, we carry with us the knowledge, and the Zionist education and values. Unfortunately, today we can only miss those days, and especially that atmosphere.

After two years, we left the agricultural settlement and went to settle at the foot of Mount Gilboa in the Jezreel Valley - near Ma'ayan Harod. We established a group called "Gilboa."

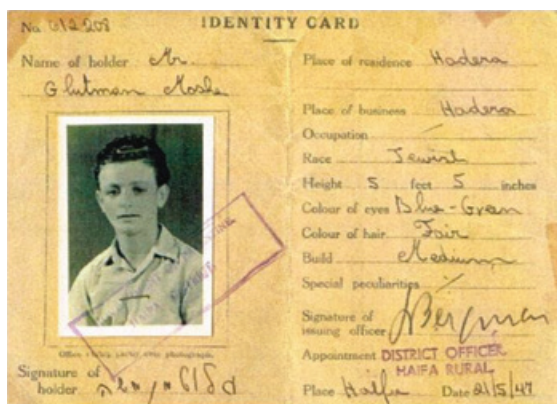
We lived our lives cooperatively on the kibbutz. Me as a "chicken coop expert," together with the late Deborah Cohen.

Our group, which specialized in the work of the cowshed, remained on the farm for a short period of time after the "Ma'apilim" left - all this in order to counsel the members of the youth group that came after us on the agricultural settlement. In the Gilboa group, we engaged in agricultural work in the kibbutzim of the area, such as Ein Harod, Tel Yosef, and more. The Jewish National Fund employed us in planting a forest on the Gilboa Mountains. Even today as I pass by there, I look proudly at the great trees I planted in 1949.



My Parents' Immigration

In the middle of 1948, my parents and siblings immigrated to Israel on one of the illegal immigrant ships "Pan York" or "Pan Crescent" and were deported to Cyprus to Camp 70. This was six months before we completed our training in the agricultural settlement. They stayed in Cyprus for three months. When they were still in Romania, they had sent me a large box of clothes. The crate arrived in Haifa, and the cargo had to be cleared from Customs. For this purpose, I needed an English ID, of course.



My English ID

This was accomplished with the generous help of the management of the agricultural settlement, and Chaya the caregiver - the housemother. Chaya traveled with me to Haifa to clear the cargo. The box of clothes was brought to the farm, and stored in the basement of one of the buildings.

I corresponded with my parents regularly, both while they were in Romania and while they were in Cyprus. The truth is that I impatiently waited for them to come to Israel, if only because of my social discomfort. I thought that when they arrived I could leave the group and join them. Since I still had a small amount of money, I would occasionally go to the Hadera settlement and buy myself a soda. One day, when I returned to the farm, I was told that my father had called the farm and looked for me, that they had arrived unexpectedly from Cyprus, and that they were in an immigrant camp in Neve Chaim near Hadera. This was a complete surprise for me. It was a hot day in June 1948. I was overjoyed, and everyone was happy for me. Jacob the caretaker bridled two mules to a cart and told me, "Take the wagon and go to the immigrant camp in Neve Chaim." I got on the wagon alone, grabbed the reins, and headed toward the immigrant camp in Neve Chaim with a feeling of bliss.

The immigrant camp consisted of tents stuck in the burning sand of June. I arrived at the camp in my "carriage of honor" and everyone looked at me as if the kings of kings had arrived. I opened my mouth and asked about the Glotman family. Many immigrants "pounced on me" and quarreled among themselves about who would get to go tell my parents the news. As I approach their tent, I saw a tap stuck in the hot sand, from which water flowed like a stream, and next to the tap stood a beautiful little girl, naked - my Zisla. I leaped out of the

cart and hugged her in an embrace as warm as the day. My father, my mother, and my brother Shimon soon arrived, and the joy was boundless. We entered their tent and father gave me an old wristwatch. Tears of joy flowed like the tap water in the burning sand.

In Neve Chaim, we found a family named Milman that were permanent residents of the neighborhood who had come to Israel many years ago, and they were from our town of Yedinitz. They welcomed us warmly in their home in the loving spirit of humanity of those days. We saw their single house surrounded by greenery, until my father began to aspire to live in a rural area like a moshav, etc. Our friends gave my parents a small sum of money. My mother began to do various work in the fields, and my father, as was his way, began to search for the future in Israel. My father, who was about 39 years old, presented himself for security service as required by law.

After all the upheavals and transfers from one immigrant home to another, my parents were sent to an immigrant home in Kiryat Shmuel near Haifa, and from there, after a short stay, they were referred by the Jewish Agency to an abandoned Arab village on the outskirts of Haifa, called Balad al-Sheikh. This was a large deserted village near Nesher. The residents abandoned the village and fled - they had good reason.

It was a murderous and cruel Arab village that was conquered by the Haganah. In the battle a member of Kibbutz Yagur named Hanan was killed, and therefore the place was given the name "Tel Hanan." When we arrived at the village, we found abandoned houses and shops. My parents, like other immigrants, received an apartment there, as well as a store in the commercial center, adjacent to the Haifa-Nesher main road. In the store my father began to do his work - tinsmithing. Later, the store became a tool store. There was plenty of income since many immigrants with no possessions settled there and had to start all over again.

After leaving the agricultural settlement, and after my extended services there at the chicken coop, together with the late Dvora Cohen who was a dairy farmer, I joined my friends in the "Gilboa" group and we established a kibbutz at the foot of Mount Gilboa. This settlement did not succeed, even after we banded together with a youth group from Kibbutz Ginegar. From Gilboa we moved to Kfar Sava with the intention of establishing a moshav. That task was not particularly successful either. Then I left the group and went back to my parents in Tel-Hanan. Between the time that I left the group and the time that I joined the IDF, I helped my father. Since he was used to physical labor, it was hard for him to do commerce.

In Tel-Hanan, my sister Malka was born (named after my aunt Malka who perished in Transnistria). It turns out that my father's diligence and perseverance - as always - also worked in the matter of "be fruitful and multiply."



My father's security service ID



My sister Zisla was born in Transnistria, and my sister Malka was born in Israel



My Enlistment in the IDF

On May 30, 1950, when I was 19 years old. I started my army service. After basic training I asked to be a driver. During the testing, the officer asked me, "Can you pass with a car between two trees?" Of course I said yes, and so they sent me to a cooking course in Ramle.

Apart from the answer to, "What do you do when a drop of milk falls into a meat pot?" - I learned nothing, disappointed that I had not been sent to a driving course. At the end of the course, they placed me on a navy ship called "Afora" (grey) - as an assistant cook. This "war ship" was built of wood and painted gray, as per its namesake. It was an old ship, and not very big. Shortly after I arrived, we sailed to Turkey to repair it. We were the first Israeli warship that sailed to Turkey. On the way, a gasoline pump worked constantly to drain the water that had penetrated the ship's belly. Me and other sailors lay on bunks. One day, lying on my bunk, busy counting the money I had, I suddenly fainted from the gas fumes escaping the pump. They took me out of the ship into the fresh air, and I remember that when I awoke from being unconscious, I saw my clenched fists still holding my few dollars.

We arrived in Turkey on the eve of Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur - the first day of our stay at Istanbul port, a few of us went

ashore, among other reasons to exchange dollars for Turkish money. We did not meet any Jews outside, so we went to the synagogue. The worshipers, seeing Jewish sailors from the Land of Israel, wearing their navy uniforms and insignia, were filled with the holy spirit on this holy day. We were seated in places of honor. When the holiday was over, they began to quarrel with each other over who would host us for breaking the fast. Remember that in those days there was an austerity regime in Israel, with food allocations, and so on. Another friend and I were invited to the home of the synagogue's gabbai. What we saw there was a dream of hospitality - plenty of food, delicacies, and things we had not seen for a long time in Israel.

Upon our return from Turkey, I was assigned to serve on the K-20 warship, which was the ship on which I came to Israel and was then called "Haganah."

When I was released from the IDF, I went back to help my father in the store – help he needed her very much. To summarize these life histories, I would like to paint a portrait of a “short period” of 32 years, during which I worked for Supergas.



As a sailor in the navy

After I got married, I was accepted to work in the company, thanks to my talent that was discovered by the company management while I worked as their agent in our shop in Tel Hanan. For me it was one of the most beautiful and interesting periods of my life. I was Assistant Manager of the Haifa branch - the deputy of Mr. Bar Yochanan, the manager - a talented man whose leadership and management skills were exceptional. In my position I discovered I had natural work skills, communicating with and managing a team of employees, and especially having contact with a diverse consumer audience.

I was soon highly valued by all levels of company management. My connection with the employees – I adored them and they adored me - stood out throughout my years of work in the company. I made personal contact with each employee, and more than once people approached me and told me about their personal problems. I discovered special skills for understanding others, even offering advice and guidance to the best of my ability.

The various consumers appreciated me - beyond my job position – admiration on a personal level that I nurtured during my work. All this was with demonstrative pleasure. One of the cases that really touched my heart, and about which I also wrote a song in my book "Poetic Paths," "I would like to linger on here.

One day a young woman entered the office with a 5-year-old girl. The woman was divorced and she asked to transfer the gas connection in her home to her name. Because the connection was on her ex-husband's name, the office clerk was required to ask the woman to send her ex-husband over to sign the documents. The woman's claim that her ex-husband did not want to come to sign was not accepted by the office clerk. The woman was referred to me, to my office, and during the conversation with her, I suggested that she give me her ex-husband's phone number, and I would convince him to come sign. The sweet girl, who sat opposite me next to her mother, upon hearing my suggestion turned to her mother and said, "Mother, I also want to talk to Dad once." And the mother replied, "But he does not want to talk to you!"

At that moment the woman asked to leave my office to change the parking space of her vehicle. When the woman left - leaving her child with me - the child stood on the chair, leaned towards me and requested, "Uncle, please give me Dad's phone number, I want to speak to him once." When I asked about it, the girl replied that she had never seen him or spoken to him. That little one touched me so that I wrote this poem for Keren – the name of the little girl.



Secluded Place (Keren Zavit) – from my book “Poetic Paths”

Six, one, three, two, four, five
Hello! I want Daddy by my side
He is big, strong, handsome, broad
He's my Dad, and I love him more

Daddy!
Maybe you will have more little girls
But I have no other father in the world
To see, to hug, just one time
Oh precious father of mine

Hello! Does my father talk?
What's your name? Is it you? Don't balk.
It's Keren – your daughter
It's really me – not another.

Dad, I just want to race
To see you and feel your embrace
Hugs and kisses from Daddy mine
Excuse me Dad, but I want to cry

Listen to what happened to me yesterday in the park
When I played catch with Sue and Mark
Evening came, cold and stark
I had to go home – it was getting dark

Sue's father suddenly was there
He spread his arms wide and stroked her hair
She waved goodbye, gave a parting tone
And I went home – all alone

שֵׁשׁ, אַחַת, שְׁלֹשׁ, שְׁתֵּים, אַרְבַּע.
הֲלוֹ! אֲנִי רוֹצָה אֶת אָבָא.
הוא גָּדוֹל, חֲזָק, יָפֵה, רַחֵב
הוא אָבָא שְׁלִי - אוֹתוֹ מָה אוֹהֵב...
אָבָא!
לֵךְ אוֹלִי, עוֹד יִהְיוּ יְלָדִים,
אֵךְ לִי, אֵךְ פֶּעַם, לא יִהְיוּ אָבָאִים.
לִי יֵשׁ, רַק אֶחָד וְיָחִיד בְּעוֹלָם,
לִרְאוֹת, לְחַבֵּק, רוֹצָה - רַק פֶּעַם...

הֲלוֹ! הֲאֵם אָבָא שְׁלִי מְדַבֵּר?
מָה שְׁמֶךָ, זֶה אֶתָּה - לא אֲחֵר?
כָּאן קֶרֶן - יִלְדָה שְׁלֶךָ מְדַבֶּרֶת,
זוֹ אֲנִי - בְּאַמָּת - לֹא אַחֲרֵת.

רוֹצָה אֲנִי אָבָא, אוֹתָךְ רַק לִרְאוֹת,
לְרוֹיז מְהֵרָה, לְפוֹל לְזוֹעוֹת
כַּמָּה הִרְבֵּה, חֲבוּקִים וּנְשִׁיקוֹת,
סָלַח לִי אָבִי, אֵךְ בָּא לִי לְבָבוֹת...

שְׂמַע, מָה קָרָה לִי אֶתְמוֹל, בְּחֶצֶר,
שִׁחַקְתִּי תוֹפֶסֶת, עִם שׁוֹשׁ וְאַבְנֵר.
הָעָרֵב יָרַד, הָיָה מְעֻט קָר
לְשׁוֹב הַבֵּיתָה, צָרִיף - מְאֹחֵר.

אָבָא שְׁלִי שׁוֹשׁ, הוֹפִיעַ פֶּתָאוּם,
הוֹשִׁיט יָדָיו וְחִבְּקָה בָחוּם
נִפְנְפָה לְשָׁלוֹם, בְּיָדָהּ הָאֲחֵת,
וְאֲנִי חֲזַרְתִּי הַבֵּיתָה - לְבָד.



My Children and Grandchildren

On 9 November 1963, my eldest son Eitan was born. Here happiness began to reveal itself in all its splendor. He was a beautiful boy. For the first time I felt a sense of fatherhood. When I started my employment at Supergas, work and family effectively filled my entire world. On May 30, 1967, with the outbreak of the Six-Day War, my second son, Boaz, was born. During the last days of pregnancy, before I was drafted into the reserves as a result of the war, we agreed that our second son's name would be Eyal. When I was in the Ya'bad village near Jenin with my company as a combat medic, I received a telegram from my father saying: "You have a son and his name is 'Boyce'. We had the brit in the bomb shelter of the house."



My friends in the company and I did not understand what "Boyce" was, as we had decided to give him the name Eyal. It turns out that the mohel decided that the name "Boaz" - "Come-Strong" – was more appropriate at that time than Eyal. Eyal in Yiddish is "Tzop."

I got a few hours' leave, and arrived home with my Uzi and a bouquet of flowers I had bought on the way. The note I attached to the flowers had two words to my wife ... Thank you! These were two beautiful children, and all of me - all my time, all my strength, all my thoughts and all my love - was for them in every way. I must mention and emphasize the help received from my parents, who lived nearby, as well as my co-workers, when I was left alone with the two boys – aged five and a half and eight and a half – after my divorce.

I will not forget Boaz's sixth birthday. The girls from the office baked a cake for me, and made a crown of flowers for the boy's head. I ran out in the middle of work to the "Hermon" kindergarten where I danced with my boy to the song "My Dear Mother" with all the rest the mothers.

Few fathers stay with the children after divorce. I can tell them that there is no greater experience in life than the challenge of a single father raising his children. One of the unforgettable experiences that I must mention here are the good people

that helped along the way. The late pediatrician Dr. Gips lived on Pevzner Street. (We lived on 4 Tavor Street in Haifa). That doctor was an angel who was very suited to his vocation as a pediatrician and loved it very much. Once, they telephoned me at work from the kindergarten because my child was not feeling well, and said that I should come immediately to the kindergarten. I called Dr. Gips. It was in the middle of hours for receiving patients at his clinic. I explained the problem to him and asked for advice. Instead of advice – being familiar with my situation - he closed the clinic and together with his wife came to my office in their car, took me to the kindergarten, and from there to our home, where the doctor treated my son with love and with dedication. I will not forget his magnanimity. After he died suddenly, to my great sorrow, I kept in amiable contact with his wife and family, just like they were my own kin.

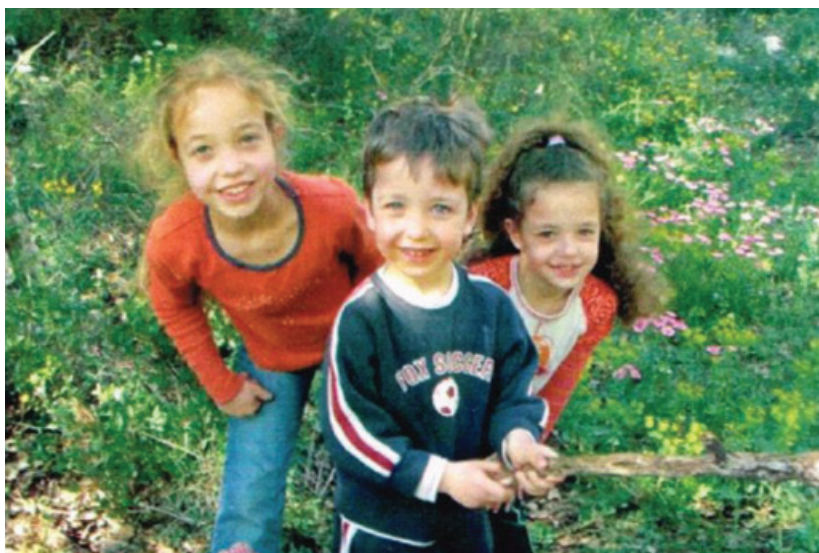
These sons - Eitan and Boaz - brought me my grandsons and granddaughters - Shaked, Nofar, Yarden, Rotem, and Elad - who are the jewels in the crown of the kingdom of life.

When I look back and see the way I've come - from the death pits of Transnistria to now - all I can do is bless the one who has granted me life, sustained me, and enabled me to reach this occasion! And you my children, grandchildren and families - may God bless you and watch over you!



Eitan, 8 and a half

Boaz, 5 and a half



My grandchildren Shaked, Yarden, and Elad



My granddaughters Nofar and Rotem

My Children's Families:



My son Boaz and his family



My son Eitan and his family



My Beloved Brother

My late brother Shimon was born on April 3, 1935, four years after me. We were brothers and soulmates. He was a beautiful boy and my parents always spoiled him more than they did me. We spent our normal childhood in our town, Yedinitz, near our relatives and friends, and there was a warm atmosphere of pastoral life in the town. Together we ran through the streets of the town with our friends.



My brother Shimon of blessed memory

Together we wrestled in the thick dust of the Yedinitz summer. Together we played with walnuts and played catch. Together we ran after the wagons of the Gentiles and hung on to them from behind for fun. Mother washed both of us together in the tin tub heated by a primus. Mother smeared both of our heads with oil against lice after our bath. We both dreamed to grow up and be big like the adults, but... All this and more continued until the outbreak of World War II.

The expulsion from the town separated us from our childhood friends - Lulia, Boris, and many others - friends with whom we grew up in our short childhood. With the expulsion began the terrible tribulations, which were foreign to us and which we experienced for the first time in life. Suddenly "we grew up" and saw life's dark side. When the deportation began, Shimon, as I mentioned, was carried by my mother, because how can one expect a six-year-old to walk dozens of kilometers a day – and without food and water. Thirst, hunger, and fatigue affected him more than it did me. I saw him suffering during the difficult moments. Despite everything, luckily and especially thanks to the immense resourcefulness of my father - a man who labored and suffered all his life - and especially with the help of God, we left the horror and returned after the war with "a nice profit" - my sister Zisla.

Shimon never separated from my parents and was with them until their arrival in Israel in 1948. Since my parents belonged to "Agudat Israel" in Romania, and since my father was a man of tradition, my brother Shimon absorbed the atmosphere of faith. When they arrived in Israel, Shimon joined the yeshiva "Tiferet Israel" in Haifa. After my parents settled in Tel Hanan, Shimon returned home.

Shimon had a keen technical sense, and with the help of my father, who diligently saved, Shimon was made a member of



My beloved brother

Egged in 1957. Shimon excelled in his work as an Egged driver, and was proud of and satisfied by his work.

His co-workers in the cooperative remember and cherish him to this day. His short life of 43 years brings me to the greatest tragedy that befell our family - the death of Shimon of blessed memory.

It was on a bright spring day, March 11, 1978, on the 2nd of Adar 2, 5738. Shimon together with his wife and small children, Anat and Ilan, went on an outing as part of the Egged tour

"The Wanderers" to the stalactite cave near Jerusalem. On the way back, they were attacked by terrorists who came from the shore. After a dire progression of events, which even today is still not clear, Shimon was trapped in the burning bus - the Coastal Road Massacre. We never imagined that such a death could befall the handsome, modest and beloved young man. Not much has been written about this tragedy, and the whole truth has not yet been told. It is kept furtively in the hearts of the survivors of the massacre, who for some reason repress it.

The eulogy of the Egged company stated:

"Shocked and hurt we bow our heads on the grave of our friend Shimon of blessed memory, and deliver a prayer for the day of vengeance against the contemptible murderers who struck the large Egged family brutally, and the Glotman family, which is part of it. Dear Shimon, who was born in Romania on April 3, 1935, immigrated to Israel in 1948 and joined the Egged family in 1957. He was an outstanding and diligent employee, worked tirelessly, and responded to every call.

Shimon was seriously injured during his military service in the Yom Kippur War, but managed to overcome his wounds and return to administrative work in the cooperative. He insisted on returning to Haganah (reservists corps), and about six months ago he returned to working as a driver.

How happy he was and how proud he was that the enemy had



My brother Shimon of blessed memory

5.11.73 . אברהם
 משה שלי!
 רשמית משה שלי
 איך חשבים את כלם חברים
 ודודי הילד בסדר ואני מרגיש
 טוב מאוד
 אהבתי מאוד לראות אתך
 את הילד הקטן והגדול
 חבלה בקרב האחים
 משה דודי חברים
 ואני אהבתי לראות!
 אהבתי מאוד
 פירוש

Somewhere in Africa, 5.11.73

Hello Moshe,

First of all, I'll ask how are you, and how are the kids and our parents?

I'm all good and feeling great.

Ever since I went down to Sinai I haven't been home, and perhaps I'll come home for vacation soon.

Send my regards to everyone,

There is nothing to worry about!

Goodbye, Shimon.

not succeeded in defeating him. He suffered greatly from his wounds, but he overcame the pain and returned to working full time. Alas his joy was premature. This time it was not in battle, but the enemy had defeated him. He was taken by the hands of the treacherous murderers who attacked men, women, and children in cold blood – the families of friends coming back from an enjoyable outing. As they sang, their lives were taken with abhorrent brutality."

In September 1998, I collected all the poems from my drawers, which certainly would have remained there until today if not for the drive, the spiritual necessity, the memories, and the longing, which are reflected in my book "Poetic Paths," and which led me to publish it, and dedicate it to the memory of Shimon of blessed memory.

In the introduction to "Poetic Paths," I wrote among other things: "This book of poems is dedicated to my late brother Shimon, who fell on the Coastal Road Massacre on Monday, March 11, 1978. My pain is interminable. After all the horrors of the war, and the huge effort it took to bring us to Israel, here my brother Shimon found his tragic death at the age of only forty-three years old.

I cannot finish this introduction without opening my closed heart and releasing a little bit of the restrained fury for actions

carried out and not carried out by the authorities at the time, which could perhaps have prevented this catastrophe.

Let this book of poems be a memorial to the song of a young life cut short, leaving a trail of memories and pain that will never cease." My book "Poetic Paths" is dedicated to my late brother Shimon, who fell on the Coastal Road Massacre while returning from an outing to the Stalactite Cave on the 2nd of Adar II, March 11th, 1978.



The Stalactite Cave whistles

The cave cried

The tear dropped

The drop froze



March 11, 1978

Sabbath of Stalactites (from my book "Poetic Paths")

Stalactites of blood in a Jerusalem grotto
Fresh and pure, like the heaven's glow
Facing a beast, without dagger or shield
Joyful and naïve, wonders yet to reveal

So much evil in the human race
It's claws digging in with disgrace
The horror of this sabbath of blood and guns
A sabbath of stalactites, of the daughters and sons

Stalactites of their blood like stones will fall
On the ears of the deaf and unseeing all
Into the hearts of the sanctimonious, preaching flood
Like a knife will pierce, the stalactite blood

If hell awaits
God, open the gate
Please avenge my country, avenge the babes
The cry of their blood from the stalactite cave

In God's holy glory, today will poise
Fathers, mothers, widows, girls, boys
They will bow their heads to the beautiful life
That was taken forever – on the sabbath of stalactites

If darkness also our sky covers
If an enemy cruel and despicable hovers
The victims' souls of holy light
We will remember on the sabbath of stalactites.

11.3.1978

שַׁבַּת נְטִיפִים (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

נְטִיפֵי דָם, בְּמַעֲרַת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם,
זָפִים וְטְהוּרִים, בְּזוֹהַר הַשָּׁמַיִם,
מוֹל חֵית אָדָם, בְּלִי מָגוּן וְשֹׁלַח,
עוֹלָזִים וְתַמִּים, בְּדֶרֶךְ הַמָּלָךְ.

רַב הָרָשָׁע, בְּתוֹלְדוֹת אֲנוּשׁ,
צִיפּוֹרֵנִי טַפְרִיו, נִנְעָצִים לֹא בּוֹשׁ,
עַל בָּלָם, תַּעֲלֶה, זִוְעֵת הַשִּׁבְתָּ,
שַׁבַּת נְטִיפִים, שֶׁל הַבּוֹן וְהַבֵּת.

נְטִיפֵי דָמָם, יִפְלוּ בְּאֲבָנִים,
עַל אֲזִנֵּי חֲרָשִׁים וְעוֹצָמֵי הָעֵינָיִים,
בָּלָב צְבוּעִים, מִתְחַסְּדִים וּמְטִיפִים,
יִנְעֲצוּ כְּלֶהֱב, דָם הַנְטִיפִים.

אִם גִּהְנוּם, יֵשׁ עָלֶי חֶלֶד,
פֶּתַח לִלִּיסִיטִים - אֱלוֹהִים אֶת הַדָּלֶת,
עָלֶי אֶרֶץ נָקוּם, נִקְמַת עוֹלָלִים,
זַעֲקַת דָּמָם, בְּשַׁבַּת נְטִיפִים.

בְּחֶרֶדֶת קוֹדֵשׁ, יַעֲמְדוּ כָּאֵן הַיּוֹם,
אָב, אִם, אֱלִמְנָה וַיִּתּוֹם,
יִרְכְּנוּ רֹאשָׁם, לַחַיִּים הַיָּפִים,
שֶׁנִּטְּלוּ לָעֵד - בְּשַׁבַּת נְטִיפִים.

אִם גַּם אוֹפֵל יִכְס, שְׁמִינוּ מִעַל,
אִם יִגִּיחַ אוֹיֵב, אֲכַזֵּר וְשֹׁפֵל,
אוֹר נְשֻׁמַּת קוֹרְבָנוֹת קְדוּשִׁים,
נַעֲלֶה וְנִזְכּוֹר, בְּשַׁבַּת נְטִיפִים.

March 11, 1978

My Brother (from my book "Poetic Paths")

Long is the path together we passed
Camps, wars, and horror - aghast
Together we hungered, thirsted, and bonded
Together we rose – we never parted

You silently carried your humble load
In your heart, hope and longing flowed
For beautiful days of fathers and sons
For grandchildren, great-grandchildren in the land you will love

The song of your life was suddenly silenced
By evil men and seekers of violence
The wick of your life and its shining flame
Was not destroyed – in our heart it remains

The heavens were dimmed on that dark day of black
It is hard to believe, and the heart simply asks
Where are you, pure soul, and why?
In a fiery chariot headed up to the sky?

Much will be written, asked, and told
In this country, not forgotten by God
The blood of the innocent, taken by fire and guns
Of fathers and infants, mothers and sons

11.3.1978

אָחִי (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

אַרְכָּה הַדֶּרֶךְ עֲבַרְנוּ יַחַד,
מִחֲנוּת, מִלְחָמוֹת וּזְווּעוֹת כְּמִלְחָת.
יַחַד רָעַבְנוּ, צָמְאָנוּ וְחִבְּרָנוּ,
יַחַד עָלִינוּ - מַעוֹלָם לֹא נִפְרְדָּנוּ.

דוֹם נִשְׁאָתָהּ הַמִּשְׁאָה הַצָּנוּעַ,
עִם תְּקוּוּהָ בִּלְבָב וּמַעֲט גִּעְגּוּעַ,
לְיָמִים יָפִים, שֶׁל אָבָא וְסָבָא,
לְנִכְדִּים וְנִינִים, בְּאַרְץ תֹּאֲהָבָה.

שִׁירַת חַיִּידָה, גִּדְמָה פֶּתַע,
בִּיַּדִּי רִשְׁעִים וְזָדִים - לֵלֵא רִתַּע.
פֶּתִיל חַיִּידָה וְאוֹרוֹ הָאֲהָרָה,
אֵינוֹ אָכַל - בְּלִבָּנוּ בּוֹעֵר.

קִדְרוּ שָׁמַיּוֹ, שֶׁל הַיּוֹם הָאֶפֶל,
קִשָּׁה לְהֶאֱמִין וְהִלָּב רַק שׁוֹאֵל;
- אֵיכָה, נִשְׁמָה שֶׁל טוֹהָר וְתוֹם,
בְּמִרְכָּבַת אֵשׁ - עֲלֵתָה לְמָרוֹם?

עוֹד רַב יִיכַתֵּב, יִסְפֹּר וְיִשְׁאֵל,
בְּאַרְץ הַזֹּאת, כִּי אֵינָה שְׂכֻחַת אֵל,
לְדָם שְׁלוּוִים, בְּדִרְכֵי נְתִיבוֹת,
שֶׁל אָבוֹת וְטָרָה, בָּנִים, אֲמָהוֹת.

January 9, 1986

My Brother Shimon (from my book "Poetic Paths")

The years have passed
Since that harried day
I refuse to believe
The terrible fate

My eyes stare out
Into endless space
Towards our God in the heavens
Will he return from that place?

I listen for the voice
Of my friend and brother
Who watches from heaven
I can hear no other

If only once
My eyes could take in
His curly locks
From his head to his chin

Cries from a heart
Broken and torn
Over his furious fate
I remain forlorn

If his calm voice I could only hear
And his generous heart
That calls to God
With no fear

His warm smile
Will never depart
From my tired and worn
And still pained heart

Please hear oh Lord
Our voices pure and whole
Bless from on high
My dear brother's soul

Years of childhood
Camaraderie with no exception
Wandering, war and poverty
And the right to redemption

My beloved brother
Please be with us oh maven
In all of our hearts
You will always find haven

To the last of days
I will remember you unending
Fathers and brothers
Will rise up trembling

9.1.1986

אָחי שְׁמֵעוֹן (מתוך ספרי "נתיבי שירה")

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| בוהות העיניים, | חלפו ח' שנים, |
| לחלל האין סוף, | מיום הנמחר, |
| לאל בשמים; | ממאן להאמין, |
| - האם הוא ישוב? | - הגורל האכזר. |

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| אלו אף פעם, | נעצות בי עיניים, |
| אובל להשקיה, | של אח ורע, |
| לבלורית ולרעם, | אישם בשמים, |
| את ראשו הרעיה. | - האם הוא שומע. |

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| קולו הרוגע, | קולות בכי מלב, |
| לורק אאזין, | שבור וקרוע, |
| לבו השופע, | הזעק ודואב, |
| הקורא - אלוהים! | - הגורל הפרוע. |

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| שמע נא אלוה, | חיוכו המללב, |
| קולנו הנך, | לעד לא ימוש, |
| ברך מגבוה, | מלפי הכואב, |
| נשמתו של האח. | - העצף התשוש. |

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| היה נא עמנו, | שנים של ילדות, |
| אחי היקר, | אחוזה ונדודים, |
| בלב של כולנו, | מלחמה ודלות, |
| מקומך נשמר. | וזכות גאולים. |

עד סוף הימים,
זכרך לעד,
אבות ואחים
יעלו ברעד.



Chapter 32

Documents

YAD VASHEM



יד ושם



רשות הזיכרון לשואה ולגבורה The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority

גלוטמן.doc

ירושלים, ל' שבט, תשס"ט
24 פברואר, 2009

לכבוד
מר משה גלוטמן
טרומפלדור 39
חיפה 32581

מר גלוטמן הנכבד,

גב' אסתר פרידמן, ממדור עדויות, העבירה לספרייתנו את עותקי הספרים שכתבת ואנו מודים לך על כך מאד.
- קשת בענן, בו הינך מתאר את קורותיך וקורות משפחתך בתקופת השואה ובשנים שלאחר מכן.
- נתיבי שירה.

חשיבות רבה נודעת להעלאת הזכרונות על הכתב, להנצחת הנספים וכתיעוד היסטורי למען הדורות הבאים.

ספרים אלו מהווים תרומה רבת ערך לאוספנו, ובטוחים אנו כי ציבור הקוראים ימצא בהם עניין.

בכבוד רב

רחל כהן
עוזרת למנהל הספרייה

העתק: גב' אסתר פרידמן, מדור עדויות.

Dear Mr. Glotman,

On behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, I would like to thank you for donating a copy of your book, *Ḳeshet be-'anan: pirḳe toldot ḥayim 'al reḳa Sho'at Transnistriyah*. We are grateful to you for documenting your important personal history and sharing it for future generations. Your donation will enrich the Library's collection of Holocaust memoirs and personal narratives. Researchers and scholars using the Library will no doubt benefit from the addition of your generous gift.

In an effort to make historical accounts such as your own known to a wider audience, the Museum is interested in making these items available online. Therefore, I would like to ask if you have a digital copy of your memoir and, if so, whether you would be willing to share it with us and grant us permission to make the full text accessible via our online catalog.

If you are amenable to this wider use of your work, or would like additional information regarding this process, please contact me at your convenience (lbell@ushmm.org; 202.488.0417). We will want to determine the most convenient means by which to transfer the digital file. Should you agree to share a digital copy with us, I will ask you to indicate your permission by completing the enclosed form and returning it to my attention at the Museum. I recommend that you retain one copy for your records. If you do not have access to a digital copy, we would still welcome your written permission for the Museum to digitize the book and make it accessible at some future time.

In addition, if your family holds artifacts, documents, or other original materials which you might consider donating to the Museum for preservation purposes and access by future generations, I would be pleased to put you in contact with the appropriate curators.

As we strive to provide greater access to materials on the Holocaust, we appreciate contributions such as yours that assist us in our mission. Once again, thank you for thinking of the Library.

Sincerely,



Lenore Bell
Director of the Library

Enclosures

Dear Moshe,

On behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum I would like to thank you for your generous donation, which helps ensure that Holocaust memory becomes a transformative force in the 21st century.

I am pleased to inform you that the Museum's 2017-18 Annual Report is now available on our website at ushmm.org/publications.

To ensure that the philanthropic investments we receive are directed to support strategic priorities that advance the Museum's mission, we have both streamlined the content of our Annual Report and reduced the number we print. If you would prefer to receive a printed copy, please contact Maureen Merluzzi at mmerluzzi@ushmm.org or 202.488.6129 and we will be happy to send you one.

This is a very critical moment for the Museum. As the Holocaust recedes in time and we gradually lose our best teachers, the survivors, sharing the lessons of the Holocaust is more urgently needed than ever before. These lessons—about the nature of hate, the consequence of indifference, and the fragility of societies—are both timeless and timely.

We are deeply grateful for your generosity and dedication to our mission.

Sincerely,
Michael Grunberger
Director, National Institute for Holocaust Documentation

Donate to Keep Holocaust
Memory Alive

Change Your Email
references

Keep Holocaust memory alive to inspire citizens
and leaders to confront hatred, prevent

Stay Connected



A little Bible, the deported took with them to Transnistria.
 They improvised a small coat and other decorations for it.
 After the war has ended, the Bible was returned to Czernowitz.
 The Bible is now presented at the "Yad Vashem" Holocaust museum.



Moshe Glotman was born on the second day of Chol Hamoed Pesach 1931 in the town of Yedinitz in Bessarabia.

Moshe spent the dawn of his childhood in a pastoral and special atmosphere that characterized a typical Eastern European town of those days, with its good and bad.

Until the outbreak of World War II, Moshe had never left the town and thought that Yedinitz was "the whole world" and that beyond the horizon posed the "edge of the world."

As such, he was captivated by the idea of deportation with a childish charm, until the deportation convoy crossed the border of the town and began the systematic extermination of the Jews.

Suddenly, Moshe and his peers "grew up" and saw the dark side of life in full force.

Death on every corner, road and path, at all times of the deportation, left scars on his soul, which still exist to this day.

Moshe's relatives and friends, who yesterday played together, turned to fire and blood, and their bones were scattered over the roads of the deportation in Bessarabia and Transnistria.

No memorial was created in their memory, and therefore Moshe, who survived the inferno, found it his supreme personal duty to commemorate them in this book.

Much has been written about the Holocaust, but always and forever there will be another place, a need, and a duty to write, to remember, and to admonish - especially for those who want to know - our children and grandchildren. Otherwise, the Holocaust could be pushed into a far corner of the memory for generations.